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A

VIEW

OF THE

CONSEQUENCES

OF

LAYING OPEN THE TRADE

TO

India,

TO

PRIVATE SHIPS;

WITH

SOME REMARKS

ON THE

Nature of the East India Company's Rights

TO THEIR

Territories,

AND

TRADE DEPENDING UPON THEM;

AND ON THE

CONDUCT AND ISSUE OF THE LATE NEGOCIATION

FOR A

Renewal of their Exclusive Privileges.

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PREFACE.

THE question, now at issue, between his Majesty's Ministers and the East India Company, which forms the subject of the following pages, is one of the greatest importance to the British Empire, that can possibly be agitated, in the present state of the world. It is a question, in the elucidation of which too many minds cannot be occupied, or too many pens employed.

The serious, and to many the unexpected turn, which the negociation for the renewal of the East India Company's Charter has recently taken, must have been sufficient to rouse and to alarm every reflecting mind, capable of appreciating the importance of the connection between Asia and Britain.

In common with others, who have feelings and affections connected with India, my mind has been deeply impressed with the mischievous, or rather, I should say, the ruinous tendency of the measures contemplated, and now, apparently, determined on, by his Majesty's Ministers. Regarding the matters in dispute, as by no means of a commercial nature; but rather of a mixed character, principally compounded of considerations of justice, policy, and expediency, upon which all men of common observation, and some knowledge of Indian affairs, may form a correct judgment; I have, upon this ground, and presuming upon the experience acquired in the course of several voyages to India, and of some residence there, ventured to arrange my thoughts on the subject, and to submit them to the public.

From the terms of the last official documents, which have transpired, it is difficult to consider the negociation, between Ministers and the East India Company, otherwise than terminated; or that the contending parties have not finally taken their respective stands. Lord Buckinghamshire, in his Letter of December the 24th, 1812, thus unequivocally announces the determination of his

Majesty's Ministers to persevere in the obnoxious measure of laying Open the Trade to India, to the Out-ports of this Kingdom:—"It is for the Court of Proprietors to decide, whether their own interests, as well as those of the numerous persons depending upon them, both at home and abroad, can best be preserved by their rejection of, or acquiescence in, those conditions, upon which *alone*, consistent with their public duty, his Majesty's Government can submit a proposition to Parliament, for the renewal of the Charter."*

In their reply, dated the 30th December, the Chairmen of the Court of Directors repeat in the following terms their determination, already so frequently declared, to maintain the rights of their Constituents: "But prepared as we shall be, if *forced* into this situation, to maintain the rights and claims of our Constituents, we must yet express our hope, that the Company will not be reduced to the hard alternative, of thus having to contend for all that is dear to them, or to accept a charter, on terms which will not enable them to execute the

* *Vide Papers respecting a negotiation for a removal of the East India Company's exclusive privileges, p.* 172.

part hitherto assigned to them in the Indian system." * To this intimation, Lord Buckinghamshire, in a letter, certainly the most extraordinary that has appeared in the course of this negotiation, and which will not probably escape becoming the subject of numerous animadversions, replies, that "it will be for Parliament to determine, whether the nation is, in this respect (the existence of the present Indian system,) without an alternative; or whether, if a change of system should be rendered necessary *by the decision of the East India Company*, measures might not be taken for opening the trade, and at the same time providing such an administration of the Government of India as might be found *compatible with the interests and security of the British Constitution*." † His Lordship has not thought fit

* *Vide Papers respecting the negotiation for a renewal of the East India Company's exclusive privileges, p.* 170.

† *Vide Lord Buckinghamshire's Letter, dated January* 4, 1813. *Ibid. p.* 183.—In the paragraph preceding the last, he says, "If the Government of India cannot be carried on with safety to the Constitution, except through the intervention of the Company, the propositions of the Court of Directors, whatever they may be, must unconditionally be admitted." This is very far from being, even generally, a correct inference. No propo-

to explain by what measures this compatibility might be effected, any more than he has the grounds on which Ministers have chosen to persist in their determination of opening the Trade to India to the Out-ports. The pompous proposition, on which they seem to lean with so much confidence and complacency, that "the Merchants of this country have a substantial claim to as much liberty of trade as they can enjoy, *without injury to other important national interests*," can here have no meaning; since the *quantum* of that liberty, which may be extended to them on this ground, is precisely the question at issue. It has been demonstratively shewn by the Court of Directors, and certainly they are in this case a much more competent authority than any of their opponents, not even excepting his Majesty's Ministers, that the Merchants of this country already enjoy as much of that liberty, as is compatible with the other important national interests concerned. And do these Ministers apprehend that

sition of the Directors, that is not founded in strict justice, liberal policy, and constitutional principles, need be admitted by the legislature. On the present occasion, if they have erred, it has been in conceding too much to a Ministry, who seemed determined to continue rising unreasonably in their demands.

justice to the East India Company, the presevation of the rights and privileges belonging to them, or the inviolability of their property, do not form a part, and a very essential part of those " important national interests?" If they do entertain such sentiments, it is high time that they should be undeceived.

It has been rendered evident to the meanest capacity that an extension of the liberty of trade to India, such as is now contended for, is not only incompatible with the best interests of the British Empire; but that it would prove the immediate ruin of those individuals, who are most vociferous in its favour. Consequently, could it for a moment be believed that the gratification of those petitioners was the real motive, which induced His Majesty's ministers to persist in the measure of laying open the trade to India from the out-ports, they would resemble the indiscreet nurse, who, in order to appease a froward child, should put into its hands some sharp, or pointed instrument, of which the first use it should make might be to wound itself. But this, I think, would be underrating their abilities. To have expected that the East India Company should be so insensible to their rights, or possess so

little firmness, as, without an equivalent, and without a struggle, to surrender what they consider the key to all their privileges, would be to argue a greater want of penetration in His Majesty's ministers, than can perhaps be fairly imputed to them. It seems much more probable that they had anticipated, and were desirous of producing, the result, which has actually happened, with the view of creating a pretext for transferring to themselves the whole power and patronage of India, and by these means of retaining their ministerial situations for life!

This transfer, to the crown, of the power and patronage, incident to the government of sixty millions of the inhabitants of Asia, which could not fail to enable its servants more commodiously to rule sixteen millions of British-born subjects at home, appears to be the grand measure, by which the ministers of the Prince Regent* propose to effect a

* It is somewhat remarkable, that Lord Buckinghamshire, although he generally designates himself and his colleagues, "*His Majesty's government*," whenever he means to bear peculiarly hard upon the East India Company, calls them "*the Ministers of His Royal Highness the Prince Regent.*" *Vide his Letter of the 4th Jan.* 1813, *published in the Papers respecting the Negociation for the renewal of the East India Company's exclusive Privileges, p.* 182.

change in the East Indian system, "rendered necessary," they say, "by the decision of the East India Company," that shall be "compatible with the *interests* and *security* of the *British Constitution!*"

But parliament, it cannot be doubted, when this great question comes before them, will take an enlarged and unbiassed view of all the grand national interests involved in the controversy. They will not, to gratify the blind or criminal ambition of any set of ministers, suffer the East India Company to be despoiled of their property, the Crown of its revenue, the people of a necessary of life, and the nation of its freedom.

62, *Hatton Garden,*
January, 1813.

CONSEQUENCES

OF

LAYING OPEN THE TRADE

TO

INDIA, &c.

FROM the establishment of the East India Company, as territorial sovereigns in Asia, it has been the usual practice, previous to the introduction of a Bill into Parliament, for the further extension of the term of their exclusive privileges, that the conditions upon which their Charter was to be renewed, and the principles upon which the Indian empire was to be governed, should be made the subject of arrangement between the Ministers of the Crown, on the part of the Public, and the Court of Directors, on the part of the East India Company. And these arrangements have generally undergone but few, or unimportant modifications, in receiving the sanction of the Legislature.

By the great extension of territory, and increase of trade, which have been progressively effected, under the judicious management of the Company,

these negotiations have, at each successive renewal, acquired additional importance. Since the Bill of 1793, the population, the territory, and the commerce, under their jurisdiction, have been more than doubled: and the civil and military establishments of their vast dominions, as well as the ties between them and the mther country, have been augmented in the same ratio. When to these is added the immense trade carried on by the Company with the empire of China, they form altogether the grandest and most stupendous, and it may truly be said, the most singular, political, and commercial edifice the world ever saw. In its now splendid state, it is not only the brightest jewel in the British Crown, but the fairest portion of the British empire. How, then, are we to characterize a measure, which must obviously destroy the unity of the approved system, by which our Asiatic possessions and commerce have, in that period, risen to such prosperity and splendour? By impartial men, and men of experience, it will be viewed as an unjustifiable experiment on the integrity and safety of the British empire;—an experiment made too at a season of peculiar political peril; and risked (if the avowed be the real motive), in mere compliment to unfounded clamours, which do not even arise from the effervescence of popular discontent, but have been excited, with much art and industry, by the unenlightened selfishness of some commercial and manufacturing bodies.

Under these circumstances, it may be considered most fortunate, for the nation, for the East India Company, and more especially for those who were most active in petitioning Parliament for an unrestrained intercourse with India, that the renewal of the Company's Charter did not come under discussion last year; but that a measure so highly important to the best interests of the State has been delayed, until the delusive expectations, which had been excited, and the erroneous conclusions which had been formed, should have time to subside, or be rectified by a perusal of the very able official correspondence, which has taken place between the Court of Directors and his Majesty's Ministers on the subject.

At the various periods of the renewal of the term of the Company's exclusive privileges, and before the system of East Indian government had attained its present almost perfect form, many speculative notions were afloat, respecting the sort of constitution which would best suit our Indian territories, consistently with the spirit and preservation of our own. Various plans were of course projected. Some were for depriving the Company of the territories, and leaving them in exclusive possession of the trade; others for depriving them of the trade, and leaving them in possession of the territories. It does not, however, appear, that, since the establishment of the present Indian system (by the Bills of 1784 and 1793), either of those ideas have been entertained

by any of our most celebrated practical statesmen. Of late years especially, the territorial government of India, and the trade between India and Europe have been regarded as, under that system, inseparably united; constituting a fabric of unprecedented grandeur, extent, and solidity, which it would be rash, presumptuous, and dangerous, in the idle view of speculative or uncertain advantages, to disturb. Even Mr. Fox, although on former occasions an avowed enemy of the East India Company, declared himself, in the House of Commons, to be of this opinion, when last in office.

It could not, therefore, but have been with surprise, astonishment, and regret, that the East India Company learnt, in the month of April last, that his Majesty's present Ministers had then recently adopted views upon this subject, very different not only from any which had been entertained by their predecessors, but even from any which they had themselves, in the course of their discussions with the Company, respecting the renewal of the Charter, hitherto avowed.

It is the more essential that these new propositions of the Ministers should be examined, in every possible point of view, before the decision of the Legislature upon them is called for, since by that decision, it is very evident, will be ultimately determined the fate not only of the East India Company, and their private rivals, but of India and of Britain.

The pending question between his Majesty's

Ministers and the East India Company, it appears to me, may be thus succinctly stated. The President of the Board of Controul, speaking in the name of all the Ministers, informs the Court of Directors, that the government of the territorial dominions, and the monopoly of the China trade, shall remain with the Company, as at present; but that they must renounce their exclusive right to the trade between India and Europe. Against this project, the Court of Directors remonstrate; and say, "To what purpose leave us the government of our Asiatic territories, and the trade to China, if you, at the same time, deprive us of the bulwark (the exclusive privilege of *employing ships* to India), by which alone they can be effectually supported?" Or, in other words, "if you establish an engine (the privilege to individuals of sending ships of all sorts and sizes, from all the ports of Great Britain to India), by which they must both be eventually destroyed?"

The question, then, which we have here to examine, appears to be strictly this:—Whether the dangers apprehended by the East India Company to the safety of their Asiatic territories and China trade, from the indiscriminate admission of the ships of individuals to the trade of India, be imaginary, fallacious and pretended, or founded in foresight, wisdom, and experience?

Before entering on this enquiry, it may be proper to remark, that all the opponents of the Company

have either egregiously mistaken, or affected to mistake, the real nature of the question. They have all regarded or affected to regard the trade to India as a monopoly, which, as shall be presently shewn, is very contrary to the true state of the case. Some of them have represented it as a losing trade; and, with sufficient inconsistency, have accused the East India Company of selfishness, in seeking to preserve a losing trade. With a still higher degree of inconsistency, they have manifested the most eager desire to participate in this "*losing* trade;" as if presuming themselves capable, as individuals, with capital and other advantages so greatly inferior to the Company, of converting it into a *profitable* one. While, indeed, they affect grounds of public utility, they shew, by the whole tenor of their reasoning, that in seeking to invade the privileges of the East India Company, they have no other view than the fallacious one, in this case, of private gain. It was necessary to their object to represent the interests of the public, and of the East India Company, as at variance, and utterly irreconcileable; and their own interests as identified with those of the public. It also happened that, in the comparatively stagnant state of commerce and manufactures last year, the persons most immediately suffering under those evils, like drowning men grasping at straws, were led to hail the era of the termination of the Company's exclusive privileges, and of the establishment of an Open Trade to India, as that of

the termination of their own misfortunes. In considering an open trade, and an increased consumption of British Commodities in India, as synonimous terms, they all seemed to concur. Ignorant of the character of the inhabitants of Asia, they regarded the regulated trade of the Company, as that which alone prevented this increase of consumption. They branded it with the name of Monopoly; and armed with the authority of Dr. Adam Smith, they declared *all* monopolies to be mischievous, and, with that of Thomas Paine, to be contrary to the imprescriptible rights of man.

The consequences of the admission of these principles would go much farther, than those who have advanced them, to serve particular purposes, could wish. They would go the length of laying open the trade to India to all the world. But we shall limit our reasoning to the boundaries of the British empire. If, upon the principle of universal right, the trade to India be laid open to *some* parts, with what justice can the same privilege be withheld from *other* parts of the British dominions? If it be an inherent right in the Merchants of Bristol, Liverpool, and Glasgow, to trade with India, is it not equally so in the inhabitants of the Orkney and Shetland Islands, of the West Indies and North America?

To argue seriously, or at any length, against these abstract and inapplicable doctrines, must here, I should apprehend, be unnecessary. The East

India Company, however, while they refuse to bow to the authority of such wild and vague hypotheses, have done themselves honour by not narrowing the question, as if it only involved the opposing interests of different bodies of men. The Court of Directors have, on the contrary, throughout their correspondence with Ministers, argued the case as it may be supposed to affect, in every grand view of policy and expediency, the interests of the nation at large; considering their constituents not as an isolated Corporation, but as members of the state, identified, in all their relations, with the great body of the community.

It is a notorious fact that the trade to India, so far from being of the nature of a monopoly, is already as open and unrestrained as is consistent with just and rational views of public utility. The tonnage, which, under the idea of extending the commerce of individuals, has been appropriated to private trade, by the Bill of 1793, is four times greater than has ever been claimed by those for whom it was intended.* Of sixty-three thousand tons allotted for this purpose, during the last six years, only sixteen thousand (about one fourth) were filled up; leaving forty-seven thousand tons to be paid for by the Company, on account of the Public.

Here is no monopoly, or impolitic restrictions on

* Vide Papers respecting the negotiation for a renewal of the East India Company's exclusive Privileges, &c. p. 129.

trade. On the contrary, greater facilities are held out to the private Merchant, and that too at a great inconvenience and enormous expence to the Company, than he chooses to avail himself of. If more tonnage than the law allots, had been required for the accommodation of the private trader, the liberal conduct of the Company in other respects evinces that they would have readily granted it.

They did actually, on several occasions, allow to private traders from India several thousand tons more than was allotted by law. The fact, indeed, is that although a certain quantity of tonnage is specified by the act of 1793, for the accommodation of the individual Merchant, it was for the discretion of the Court of Directors to have allowed more, had it been required.

Did they not with the most commendable liberality, offer the County of Cornwall to export annually to China, twelve hundred tons of tin, *freight free*;* although, were they only to consult their own convenience, they could supply that market with the same article upon better terms from various parts of India? Have they not, upon a similar principle of accommodation, made an annual sacrifice of £.50,000, for the special encouragement of the woollen manufactures of this country?

To call a trade, conducted upon such principles, a monopoly, is equally contrary to reason, and to fact.

* Ibid. p. 89.

But, besides allotting more tonnage annually to individual Merchants, than these have been disposed to occupy, the Company have shared, in another way, the fruits of their commerce with the public. The payments which they have, at various periods, made to the state, from 1768 to 1812, amount to £.5,135,319; or at the rate of one hundred thousand pounds, and upwards, annually;* to say nothing of the immense revenue arising from their well-regulated trade.

"It is a solecism," as has been well and truly observed by an eloquent Proprietor of East India Stock,† "to call that trade a monopoly, which admits the whole country to a partnership in its eventual gains; and which allows any Merchant, or Trader, to export to or import from India, to an extent considerably beyond what has ever been claimed." That is not a monopoly, of which every person, and every association, by purchasing stock, may become members; whose sales are regulated, the prices being left at the pleasure of the buyers; and their amount annually laid before Parliament. The East India Company, in short, is not a private Corporation, trading exclusively; but the British nation, trading under legislative regulations to India.

* Vide Papers respecting the negotiation, &c. p. 57.

† Mr. Randle Jackson—vide his speech delivered at a General Court of Proprietors, 5th May 1812, p. 13.

It will not be supposed, by any man of sense, that the Company would be disposed to make the great sacrifices, which have been here alluded to, merely to humour the caprices, or to fall in with the false notions of interest of particular descriptions of men, had they not powerful motives, arising from other sources than those of mere commercial profit, for wishing to retain the exclusive privilege of the *navigation* to India: for this alone, if I understand the matter right, is what the Company contend for, as essential not only to the security of their China Trade, but to the permanent safety of their Indian Empire. They will, I am persuaded, have no objection to make the farther sacrifice of allotting to the use of the private Merchants, as much more tonnage, than was granted by the Act of 1793, as there may arise a demand for. But surely, since this can be shewn to be essential to the safety of their dominions, they have a right to expect that all trade to India should continue to be carried on, in ships, under their immediate controul, or exclusively in their service.

The question, then, as it at present stands, between his Majesty's Ministers and the East India Company, does not respect the exclusive privilege of *trade*, but the exclusive privilege of *navigation*; and divides itself into three branches:—

1. The admission of private ships into the trade of India, from the Port of London only.

2. Their admission from the outports.

3. The admission of ships of inferior burthen into the trade.

It was upon the scale, contemplated in the first branch of this proposition, that Lord Melville proposed the alterations in the Indian system of trade should be carried into effect. Even on this comparatively limited scale, as at first intended by his Majesty's Ministers, the measure will appear to be more than sufficiently pregnant with mischief; while the benefits to be expected from it, are, according to the acknowledgment of Lord Melville himself, at least extremely doubtful. But the two ulterior branches, brought forward by the successor of that nobleman, immediately after his retirement from the Board of Controul, are peculiarly well calculated to aggravate and accelerate the evils, which would have been occasioned by the original branch in a smaller and a slower degree.

These evils I propose to consider in the following order; and to shew:—

1. That the establishment of an unlimited intercourse, by Private Ships, with India, would inevitably lead to the colonization of that country; which could not but terminate in its separation from Great Britain.

2. *That this intercourse, particularly if carried* on from the outp[redacted], and in ships of small burthen, would be productive of irregularity, smuggling, depredations, and even piracy, in the Indian Seas: that its immediate effect would be materially to

injure the Company's regular trade to China; and that it would endanger the permanency, or occasion the entire interruption of the intercourse with that country, to the utter deprivation of an article, become essential at least to the comforts of the inhabitants of this country, if not an absolute necessary of life.

3. That, at home, the public revenue would suffer an immense loss, and the commodities of India an alarming deterioration, in consequence of the smuggling which would unavoidably ensue, and become with private adventurers a principal occupation, throughout the coasts of the Empire: that this loss would be farther enhanced by the additional expence of collecting the revenue at the outports; and that the public would be disgusted by the legions of Custom House officers, whom it would be necessary to appoint for that purpose.

4. That, in return for so many risks to the safety of both Empires, the public would derive nothing beyond the speculative and delusive prospect of some uncertain and remote benefit; while the individuals, who, in their eagerness to discover a new resource against the pressure arising from the stagnation of commerce, seem disposed to overlook all obstacles, would find in the participation, so much coveted, of the Indian Trade, nothing but disappointment and ruin; it being absolutely incapable of that extension, which, from a lamentable ignorance of facts, they suppose private industry could effect.

In offering a detailed elucidation of these propositions, I may begin by remarking that the prevention of colonization has always, hitherto, been a great and leading principle in our Asiatic government; and that, unless some new light has recently broke forth to shew us that this grand measure of precaution has been founded in erroneous policy, it would appear to be the part of wisdom to continue in those paths, which have been so securely and prosperously trodden by our predecessors.

The division of the natives of Asia into numerous casts, and the principle of perpetuity which pervades this distinction, if one may so speak, constitute a source of security to the permanence of our East Indian Government, hitherto unparalleled in the history of the world; and, as there is no great probability that mankind will ever again be edified by a similar phœnomenon, it is rather a pity that we should be in any particular hurry to adopt measures, which might prematurely destroy it. Here the maxim, so frequently in the mouths of politicians, of "divide and govern," pervades, in a practical shape, the population; and stands consecrated by the hand of time itself. Nor could there be a state of things better calculated to insure the happiness of a people, when, as in this instance, the views of their governors are invariably directed by a liberal, enlightened, and humane policy.

Here the facts completely coincide with the theory; for there is not in the universe a people

more happy, or less burthened, than those natives of Asia, who are under the dominion of the East India Company.

The division of the people of Asia into numerous casts, and the mutual repulsion of these casts, constitute a state of things, of which the influence upon morals, opinions, and government, appears to have been but seldom duly appreciated. To these circumstances, perhaps more than to all others, may be attributed the safety, amidst foreign wars, and intestine commotions, of the British possessions in India. And, while they exist, they will continue in a great measure to obviate the danger, which would instantaneously arise from the active operation of public opinion, when adverse, in so extensive and populous a country. Did the population of Asia resemble that of Europe or America, or indeed of any other portion of the world, it is obvious that the power of the sword would afford but a precarious security to the duration of British supremacy in the East. As it is, I do not see any possible event that can endanger the stability of this power, in so far as it may depend upon these circumstances, but such a mixture of foreign population (which could only arise from the tolerance of colonization), as would weaken, or obliterate these characteristic features of the native inhabitants.

It is true that this principle of perpetuity, or stagnation, if you will, has been regarded as a misfortune, by some very benevolent persons, who, in their

zeal for improvement, have wished to see the natives of India imitate, even in their dress, the natives of Europe. I remember to have heard an anecdote, to this effect, related of a very worthy *puisne* judge, of the supreme court of judicature in Bengal. As the first judges, who were appointed to India, were proceeding by water to Calcutta, perceiving some barefooted natives travelling along the muddy banks of the Ganges: "Brother Chambers," says Mr. Justice Hyde, "I hope, before you and I return to England, to see those poor fellows dressed in buck-skin breeches and boots." Sir Robert Chambers, who, with equal benevolence, was a better judge of human nature, only smiled at the simplicity of his worthy colleague.

As on the permanency of this singular and truly characteristic feature, which distinguishes the population of the East, depends, in no inconsiderable degree, the duration of the British power in Asia, if it were practicable to assimilate in character the inhabitants of that country with those of Europe, I should applaud his philanthropy, rather than his wisdom, who should desire to see such an alteration speedily realized. Yet there does not occur to my mind any measure better calculated to produce that effect, unless a premium were offered to colonists, than that which is now in question. It will not, I apprehend, be denied, that in the progress of colonization, those leading traits of the Asiatic character, which tend so powerfully to secure to us their alle-

giance, would be gradually weakened, defaced, and obliterated. Nor can it be doubted that the danger to the existence of the British power in India would be equally certain, whether it should arise indirectly from a change effected in the character of the natives by colonization, or directly from the increasing number of colonists.

Every one conversant in history, knows that it is the common course of distant colonies, whenever they feel a sense of their own strength, to feel also an independence of the mother country, and to acquire the disposition to embrace the first favourable opportunity of throwing off their allegiance. India cannot be supposed to form an exception to this general rule; and I cannot well comprehend how any man, wishing well to both countries, and understanding their true interests, can venture, in the present political state of the world, to recommend the adoption of a measure, which could by possibility lead to their separation.

How far the measure of admitting private ships to the trade of India be of this description, is what we are now to examine. And I think it will appear manifest to the meanest capacity, that colonization, and the other evil consequences, which have been apprehended from it, would, especially on the extended scale recently suggested, be the inevitable results.

The connection between India and Britain, in their commercial, as well as political relations, is

essentially and in its nature different from any that has ever existed between other countries. Consequently, history does not afford us, in our reasoning, either parallel or analogy. With respect to the trade, or rather the navigation, which alone is at present in question, experience has shewn that regulation is as necessary to its well being, as laws are to the maintenance of social order. But this is altogether incompatible with the indiscriminate admission of private ships, in the manner proposed, to the trade of India. The great distance between the two countries; the immense extent of coast, which encircles the British territories in India: the numerous ports and islands, belonging to so many different nations, by which the course of the navigation is interspersed; would afford so many facilities to the deceptions and depredations of the evil disposed; so many temptations to those whose integrity is unconfirmed; and so many chances of eluding detection to those who may have committed crimes, that I should tremble at the result, both in a view of public morals and of public safety, of the gigantic experiment of freeing a commerce so vast and so singular in its nature, from those salutary restraints, under which it has so long increased and flourished. In the present convulsed state of the world, the rashness of such an experiment could only be equalled by its criminality.

The facility with which Ministers have yielded to the solicitations of those mercantile and manu-

facturing bodies, who have, in their dreams, expected to derive incalculable advantages from the trade to India being laid open to private ships, could alone have been founded on an erroneous belief that it is practicable to make regulations, in India and in Europe, which would obviate the dangers that are justly apprehended from that bold and extraordinary measure. But all men of experience on the subject, know that this expectation is utterly absurd. By what code of regulations, indeed, could adequate restraints be imposed on the conduct of persons trading to India, independent of the Company's control, and navigating ships not in their service? Respecting the Code proposed, which is to effect those wonders, we have hitherto derived no information.

Let us trace the probable progress of this new navigation.—A private, independent ship arrives at a port in India. She there discharges the whole, or such part of her cargo as suits her convenience; reloads; and proceeds (if the Eastern Archipelago be comprehended in the space which they are to be allowed to navigate) to some of the islands adjacent to China, to New South Wales, to the South-West Coast of America, to the Cape of Good Hope, or in short to any part of Asia, Africa, Europe, or America; even to France, or the United States, if at peace with this country: for it must be presumed that in the owners or supercargoes of such ships, not in the Company, or their agents, would remain

the right of directing their ulterior destinations. Let us suppose, what would very frequently happen, that the commanders, or supercargoes, were also the owners of such ships; and that, instead of embarking for any definite voyage, their view was to avail themselves of such favourable opportunities as might occur, of engaging in profitable adventures, without being very scrupulous about the means. Might not adventurers of this description, after having perpetrated the most flagitious acts, even robbery or piracy, against the natives of India, or other acts of a more public nature, affecting politically the interests of the East India Company, find impunity, or even welcome and protection, by taking refuge in France or America? Might not many such adventurers, under the pretence of commerce, act as agents for, and be regularly employed to convey to India the emissaries of the powers at war with this country, or whose policy in peace is adverse to its prosperity? This, as every one is fully aware of, who knows the nature of man, and the state of India, is not to proclaim ideal or imaginary evils; but to anticipate certain and indubitable results. If there are in this country men base enough to aid French prisoners in escaping from captivity, is it uncharitable to believe that there are others, who would convey the emissaries of that nation to our East India colonies; seeing that the chances of detection and punishment are so much diminished by the distance? What securities could the East India Company, or the na-

tion exact of the owners of ships, not in their service, especially those sailing from the out-ports, which might not easily be eluded? Supposing securities were exacted, even to the full amount of the value of the ship, in case of any misconduct during the voyage, what degree of safety would be found in this measure? In case of detection, the real or ostensible owners might evade the impending storm, by taking shelter in a foreign or hostile port; or they might choose to abide the issue, having insured compensation for the forfeiture, from the individuals or the governments, whose projects their vessels were serving.

These are consequences which ought to be sufficient, independent of the risk of colonization, to alarm men of reasonable and sober calculation. But when we reflect, that every one of these private ships might allow the whole of their British crews to quit them in India, to be replaced by Lascars, or foreign European sailors; or that, their discipline being necessarily inferior to that of the Company's ships, their crews might all abandon them; and that no precautions or restrictions, which it is possible to devise, can prevent these results in part; it must be obvious how rapidly the measure of laying open the Trade to India to private ships would accelerate the progress of colonization.

Nor could this progress be either prevented or impeded, as some have erroneously supposed, by any measures of the local governments, which

would not bear a character of despotism inconsistent with the state of society in that part of our dominions. Persons having made a losing voyage by trade (which would be the case with a great many, if private ships were allowed) would be desirous, with the very best intentions, of repairing their losses by a residence in India. Others, having offers of an advantageous settlement, might clandestinely or by connivance quit their ships. Some might be left behind from sickness, and some abandon their situation in disgust. The number of persons who, actuated by one or several of all these various motives, or determined by other circumstances of accident or of choice, would seek to better their condition by remaining in India instead of returning with their ships to Europe, would, it may reasonably be expected, frequently bear a considerable proportion to the whole number of the crew; and having procured themselves an establishment, how could the local governments, while they conducted themselves as quiet, peaceable, and loyal subjects, oblige these persons, without appearing excessively rigorous, or even cruel, to relinquish the establishments which they had obtained, and to return to Europe? We are here supposing the local governments to have the means of ascertaining all persons so circumstanced, a thing evidently impossible, without the introduction of a system of police inconsistent with all ideas of British Government. If it were even practicable, by the

strictest vigilance, to oppose at the commencement some sort of limits to the inundation of emigrants which would thus pour into India, it is evident that these limits could not be long effectual. The present restrictions being removed, the progress of emigration would increase in a geometrical ratio, the inducements to new colonists increasing in that proportion to the number of the old ones.

Of the effects that would result in this respect from laying open the Trade to private ships, some reasonable conjecture may be formed by contemplating the number of Europeans that have settled in India, from the Company's chartered ships, notwithstanding the strict bonds by which these are connected with their employers. In cases of irregularity the Company can withhold from the owners their freight; they can mulct the captains and deprive them of their commands; they can dismiss the officers from their service. But even the great power which the Company thus possess over the owners, captains, and officers of their regular ships has not always been sufficient to prevent their crews from forming a residence in India. How much more feeble then, or rather what a nullity would be their authority over private ships, of which the owners, commanders, and officers would, under the system proposed, be wholly independent of them?

But the emigration to India would by no means be confined to those descriptions of persons, who

might casually quit their ships in order to form a residence in that country. There are many circumstances, and among them the flourishing and secure state of the British dominions, which now more than formerly produce a tendency to the colonization of Asia. Those who went with permission, at former periods, to the East Indies, under the denomination of free-mariners, or who casually remained there and settled as merchants or traders, with licenses from the Company, invariably went abroad with the view, after having realized a competency or a fortune, of returning to spend the evening of their days in their native country. Now, however, that fortunes are not so easily acquired, and that the mode of living among Europeans in India is considerably improved, many persons, who would have gone formerly with the intention of returning, will proceed to that country, assured of the stability of the British power, with a design of making it a permanent residence.

Thus the British Empire itself, should this feeling extend, an effect which the measure in contemplation is admirably calculated to produce, might suffer an alarming depopulation: and it is no less reasonably to be expected that, under the existing pressure of war and despotism in other countries, an immense emigration would take place from almost all parts of the world, which would naturally concentrate in India, as being now the most favoured asylum of peace, security, and plenty.

This result could not fail to be farther accelerated by the progress of events in South America, New South Wales, and other countries, which, from their position, would always, if navigation were unrestrained, have a considerable intercourse with the Company's territories: and the additional intercourse, upon the return of peace, of the nations now in hostility with us, would powerfully contribute toward the same end.

Upon the whole, in reviewing this measure in all its bearings, the conclusion which we are obliged to form is, that if the object intended were to encourage emigration to India, a better or a more appropriate plan could scarcely have been devised for that purpose, than that of granting *unlimited* permission to private ships to trade to that country. And how, I would ask, is the permission to be *limited?* If licenses from the Company should be deemed necessary, how can they, without the grossest inconsistency and injustice, be granted to some merchants and to some ship-owners, but refused to others? If they should *not* be deemed necessary, then every person in the kingdom, who has the ability and the fancy to embark in such an undertaking, may fit out a ship for India, and despatch her at whatever period he pleases.

Thus India would be colonized!

With respect to the effect which that result would produce on the permanency of its connection with Great Britain, no man, I should think, will be

hardy enough to deny that it would prove ultimately fatal; and the only difference of opinion, which could reasonably arise, would be respecting the precise period at which their separation would happen.

The next proposition is, that opening the Trade of India to private ships would be productive of irregularity, smuggling, depredations, and even piracy in the Indian Seas; that it would interfere materially with the Company's regular Trade to China, and even endanger the permanency of, or entirely interrupt, the intercourse with that country.

Under the system of Open Trade proposed, there is not a doubt that, in so vast a range of coast many opportunities would occur, in places to which British laws and British protection have not yet fully extended, of plundering, over-reaching, or otherwise mal-treating the mild and inoffensive inhabitants: and, although the natural love of justice would with many prevail over all temptations, yet there are others who would allow themselves to be seduced into acts of violence, treachery, or deception, which the facility of escaping punishment would render too alluring to be always resisted. However we may be advanced in refinement, I am not aware that, in respect to sound morals, the present times are much superior to what they were a century ago; and we know that, at that period, a regular system of piracy was organized by the in-

terlopers, who frequented the Indian Seas, to the great inconvenience and loss of the East India Company, and the imprisonment by the native powers, of their most valuable servants *. Some of the piratical vessels, which then infested those seas, were even fitted out by British subjects, from New York, and other parts of America, then under our own dominion †. It is true, the present state of India by land, and that of our naval power in the Eastern Seas, would render such projects now much more hazardous. But if, from these circumstances, private adventurers should seldom be daring enough to venture upon absolute piracy, they would still have sufficient temptations and opportunity to commit minor depredations.

The injury which would arise from this source to the Company's China Trade is equally certain, but of much greater importance. It was a judicious precaution of the Court of Directors, with a view to the safety of this trade, to desire that private ships might be prohibited from having access to the Molucca Islands, or Eastern Archipelago. But even this restriction, although undoubtedly some

* *Vide Bruce's Annals of the East India Company, Vol. III. pp.* 204 *and* 210.

† *Ibid. pp.* 223 *and* 271.

would, I apprehend, be but a very slender security against the danger. Private ships would find it profitable to bring home teas. The temptation to smuggle an article, which bears ninety-six *per cent.* duty *ad valorem*, is too great to be resisted, in the first instance, from the mere apprehension of remote detection and punishment. It is an evil which can only be resisted, *in limine*, by some such system of restriction as that which at present exists. And hence, it may be pronounced, without reserve, that to lay open the East India Trade to private ships would be, in other words, to lay the foundation of an illicit commerce, more extensive, and more injurious in its consequences, than any that has ever existed in the world.

Even were the ships of individuals prohibited from visiting the Molucca Islands, which however His Majesty's Ministers have shewn some reluctance to accord, encouragement would still arise to the exportation of teas and other commodities from China, to answer the demand occasioned by these ships. These commodities would find their way to some central ports in the Indian Seas, which would in such case become large depôts; and thus, from the inordinate profits which would attend each successful voyage, an immense and a regular system of clandestine Trade, would spontaneously spring up. It would not be in human ingenuity to prevent it. Neutral and hostile nations would think it their in-

terest to protect and encourage such a traffic: and this very circumstance might lay the foundation of new wars.

Whenever peace shall take place between this country and France (and war cannot be eternal), the evils arising from this source may naturally be expected to increase. It would be unreasonable to suppose that, at whatever period that event may happen, we shall be in a situation entirely to dictate the conditions of the peace, or that the enemy will not aspire to the restoration of his Asiatic possessions, at least the islands which we have recently captured, as equivalents for other objects, which he may be disposed to relinquish. In the event, then, of our being obliged to restore the Islands of Mauritius and Bourbon, would they not form very convenient depôts for Clandestine Trade? And, is it not highly probable that, with this very view, they would be declared free ports? Madagascar, Manilla, and other places not within British jurisdiction, would also naturally become the resorts of such a commerce. We could not, if at peace with these nations, prevent French, American, Spanish, or Portuguese ships from bringing teas from China, for the purpose of lodging them at these depôts; nor the ships of our own private merchants from touching at such ports, in order to purchase those teas with the view of smuggling them into Great Britain, or some intermediate ports.

Upon the return home of those private ships the Azores, the Western Islands, the Madeiras, would afford convenient stations for carrying on this traffic to any degree: every part of the coasts of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, would offer similar facilities: and, in the event of importation from India being extended to the out-ports, as *now* proposed, the most extensive and systematic smuggling could not be obviated by all the efforts of the legions of Custom-House Officers, supposing these persons to do their duty, whom the government might think fit to appoint.

Were importation even confined to the port of London, as *at first* proposed by Ministers, the coasts of Cornwall and France, the Islands of Jersey and Guernsey, would present to adventurers abundant opportunities of successfully carrying on an illicit Trade, on a very large scale.

But independently of these numerous facilities, so fertile in expedients is the genius of Trade, that places of rendezvous might, and no doubt would, be appointed, in different latitudes and longitudes, at which smaller vessels would be directed to wait for those of a larger size, in order to take charge of the clandestine part of their cargoes, to be conveyed to places where it could be disposed of with advantage, promptitude, and safety.

If, in the course of such voyages, these private ships should be occasionally captured, their clandestine trade seized, or their regular cargoes confiscated,

the mischiefs to the East India Company and to the revenue, would not thereby be in the smallest degree diminished. It would only be a transfer of property from the hands of the private trader to those of the crews of our men of war, or of the Custom-House officer. In proportion to the extent to which this clandestine trade might be carried on, whether the adventurers in it should be gainers or losers, would the profits of the Company and the revenues of the Crown be diminished?

With respect even to the fair private Trade, although it would not so much affect the revenue (it would, however, in no inconsiderable degree increase the expences of collecting it), the struggle which would take place, could not fail to prove injurious to the Company, although, in their corporate capacity, which has been given to them in perpetuity, they would of course surmount the competition of all individual rivals. In this rivalship, every honest private competitor would undoubtedly be ruined. But we shall suppose, for the sake of the argument, that the individual Merchants carrying on a fair private Trade to India, should prevail over the Company, what difference could it make to the Public, whether the Company or their private rivals, were the first to be ruined? One thing is quite certain, that it is the illicit Trader alone who would benefit by the change. And if the measure of admitting private ships, of all sizes, and from all ports, to trade to India, in defiance of all these

dangers, is to be carried into effect, I am of opinion, that the Bill by which it is to be enacted, ought to be denominated "an act for establishing, protecting, and extending illicit commerce between India and Britain."

It is well known, that enough of tea for the consumption of the whole United Kingdom has always been supplied, in an unadulterated state, and at reasonable prices, by the East India Company; and that from this source has arisen their principal commercial profits.* Let us now enquire what would be the effects upon these profits of admitting private ships to the Trade of India. An increased demand for tea, and a consequent rise in the price of that article, would immediately take place in China; while the competition of illicit Traders, by producing a superabundant supply, would occasion a fall in the price of the same commodity at home. Thus the profits of the Company would be unfavourably affected, by a double operation. The revenue, depending upon this source, it is obvious, would be almost wholly annihilated. And what would the consumer benefit by the change? While the abatement, which it would occasion, on the retail prices, could not be sensibly felt, even by the poorest persons in society, the sophistication, which would

* Twenty-five *millions* of pounds of various kinds of tea is the average quantity sold at the Company's sales in the year.

in consequence take place, of an article become a necessary of life throughout the British dominions, would diminish the comforts, and might injure the health, of almost every member of the community. And thus, from a measure pregnant with danger to so many various interests, it cannot be said that a single incidental benefit is promised to the public.

The Company, crippled as they would then be, could no longer afford to export to China, as they have been accustomed to do, at an immense loss, to the annual amount of a million sterling of the metals and woollens of Great Britain. And thus, some of our best staple commodities, contrary to the fallacious expectations entertained by many of those who deal in them, would, instead of experiencing an increase, suffer, from the measure proposed, an immediate diminution of sale.

So assured, indeed, were the Proprietors of the Cornwall Mines, of the loss that would arise on the sale of their products in China, if exported on their own accounts, (and the same apprehensions would, of course, be entertained by private Merchants) that they thought proper to decline the liberal offer of the Company, to convey annually twelve hundred tons of their metals to that country, freight free.

The annual sacrifices thus made by the Company at the shrine of the public, particularly in respect to woollens and metals, they were enabled to bear, both by the profits of their homeward

cargoes, and by the mutual support which their territorial revenue, and commerce, afforded to each other. From their mixed character of Sovereigns and Merchants, they were enabled to effect, what it is utterly impossible that individuals, in their mere commercial capacity, should have the power to accomplish.

From all these considerations, it follows, that the plan of granting liberty to Private Ships to trade to India, even if they should be excluded from the Eastern Archipelago, is a certain, although an indirect, mode of depriving the East India Company of all the benefits of the China Trade; and may, eventually, deprive the inhabitants of these Kingdoms of one of the most essential necessaries of life;—an article, which scarcely an individual from the throne to the cottage can now dispense with, and which chiefly administers to the subsistence of the very poorest classes of society.

If the Moluccas, indeed, were to be included in the tracts, which Private Ships are to be permitted to navigate, the ruin of the Company's China Trade would be considerably more direct and rapid; and the danger of the deprivation of Tea to the inhabitants of these Kingdoms much more imminent. These Islands, as stated by the Deputation of the Court of Directors, "would hold out irresistible temptations to lawless European Settlement, enterprize, and adventure, before which the Company's China Trade must sink, as this maritime resort

would certainly become the very focus of dangerous and illicit intercourse with the Continent of India."

As this private trade would of course be carried on by a species of adventurers, who would not be much disposed to restrict themselves either to legal, or moral means, in order to render their voyages profitable, they would not, if it should appear to them to be conducive to that end to proceed into the China Seas, think it necessary to pay a very scrupulous regard to the limits that might be assigned to their destination by the New Charter. In this manner, an indefinite number of unconnected Europeans, with views of the most irregular kind, would find their way to the borders of the Chinese territories. We know how suspicious that government has always been of strangers; how indifferent in general to foreign intercourse; that they even banished the Europeans, at one period, to Macao; and that it is only by the great influence of the East India Company, and the regular conduct of their Servants, that their Ships are allowed to visit Canton, and their Supercargoes to reside there, during one part of the year.

What, then, would be the consequence of that sort of intercourse, which might be expected to take place, between the natives of China and Europeans of the description I have just mentioned, after the regular Ships, and the accredited Authorities, should leave Canton? Nothing but disorder; and the ultimate exclusion of all Europeans from

China! An event, that would involve in its consequences, four millions of revenue!—a million of export!—the employment of a large fleet of most excellent Ships, each of warlike equipment!—the ruin of private Speculators!—the palsying of the functions of the Company!—and, the deprivation of an article, which has now become to all ranks of British subjects, a necessary of life!

The Commercial intercourse between China and Russia, by land, it is well known, has, upon similar grounds, been frequently interrupted. This happened in 1785; and the communication was not re-opened till 1792, being a period of seven years.* This measure has always originated with the Chinese Government, by whom the orders for shutting and re-opening the communication, between the two countries, have usually been issued several months before they have been made known to its subjects by the Government of Russia.†

* This has been represented by some as a period of war between Russia and China. But we have never heard of battles between Russian and Chinese Armies. And it appears most reasonable to believe, that commercial irregularities were the sole ground of the interruption of intercourse, which took place, at this period, between the two nations.

† *Vide Affidavits of Joseph Fawell, in a pamphlet entitled, "The Right of every British Merchant to trade within the Geographical limits defined by the Charter of the East India Company, vindicated, &c." By T. Lee—p. 71—79.*

We come now to consider the effects, which this measure would have upon the revenue. It has been already stated that the loss to the public revenue of this country, in the event of opening the trade to India to private Ships, would be in the direct ratio of the illicit Trade, which, under colour of this Commerce, might be carried on. The quantity of Tea at present imported being quite sufficient for the consumption of the inhabitants of these kingdoms, it must be obvious, that an additional importation would not necessarily be accompanied by an additional consumption. But the increased supply, from illicit Trade, would occasion a diminution of the quantities sold at the Company's sales, and of the prices; and thus, in two ways, effect a diminution of the revenue. It can scarcely be necessary to observe, that the expence of maintaining the legions of Custom-House Officers, whom it would be

The author of this Pamphlet thinks it would be quite expedient and just, to deprive the East India Company of the exclusive privilege of the trade to China, on the ground of some misconduct which he alleges against *their Agents* in that country.

Another writer, on the same side, after having roundly pronounced the *present* Company incapable (from their long experience I presume), very gravely assures us that a *new* Company (without any experience) would be much better qualified to conduct this trade!! And he proposes that this *inspired* Company should pay one million a year to government!!! So much for the opponents of the Company.

deemed expedient, under the system proposed, to appoint to the out-ports, would operate a farther diminution of the revenue; and that it could not fail to be otherwise very obnoxious to those, who are of opinion that the increase of all such appointments, by unduly augmenting the influence of the executive power, must trench upon the principles of the constitution.

But even at the price of this additional odium and expence, it would be so impracticable to prevent, or even to oppose a barrier to smuggling, if ships were permitted to unload at the out-ports, that it would almost of necessity become the principal occupation of the individual adventurers, who might engage in the East India Trade. The fair individual trader could not long successfully compete with the Company, who would of course continue their commercial operations, in their corporate capacity, as long as they were not an entire loss, or until, by the irregularity of the interlopers, the communication with China should be entirely stopped. One of the inevitable effects of the competition between the Company and the fair private trader, operating in conjunction with the high duties upon Tea, would be to render smuggling, with all its risks, by far the most gaining trade; and, "in fact, however covered or disguised, it would become the *principal object*."

Under the system in question, then, even in the limited shape originally proposed, it may very fairly

be maintained, that all the regulations which, the utmost extent of human ingenuity could devise, would not be sufficient to prevent smuggling, as it would be the most lucrative, from becoming the principal object of those, who should embark in the East India Trade. And there can be still less doubt that the evil would be farther aggravated, in as far as it is capable of aggravation, by the ulterior projects of allowing access to Private Ships to the Molucca Islands, and entrance into the out-ports of these Kingdoms; but more especially by the admission into the trade of vessels of inferior burthen.

Such vessels could, in India, go into minor ports, and more easily form connection with the natives; and their intercourse, and consequent irregularities, would be such as neither the vigilance or power of the Indian Governments, would be able to discover or controul. On their return, they could enter the small ports of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and easily elude the vigilance, or purchase the connivance of the Custom-House Officers.

That his Majesty's Ministers should not have felt the force, and admitted the validity of the irrefutable arguments adduced by the Deputation of the Court of Directors, against admitting vessels of this description to a participation in the India Trade, is to me extraordinary, and almost unaccountable. On this subject, the deputation express themselves in the fol-

lowing terms:—"In short, if a mere chance *outward*, for the sake of smuggling *homeward*, was the speculation and the object of adventurers, undoubtedly small Ships would best answer their purpose; but if an honourable commercial intercourse with India was the object of Government, it could only be maintained by Ships of a respectable size, and suitable equipment as to stores and force, under the conduct of able and *responsible* commanders and crews."

That the size of the ships, and the respectability of their equipments, are of importance, in a political, as well as in a commercial view, is evinced by the different degrees of respect paid to the Company's regular ships, and to those of the American traders, in the Eastern Seas. The large ships of the Company, equipped and disciplined as they are, and navigated by gentlemen of education, rank in society, and nautical skill, command respect, and insure obedience, from the natives of India. But should a rabble of vessels, of all sizes and denominations, be admitted to the Indian Seas, it requires not the gift of prophecy to foretell that, with much immediate mischief to the Company, and almost the annihilation of the revenue arising from the regular trade, their course will be marked with irregularities and crimes, that will bring indelible disgrace on the British character and name in the East, and lead eventually to the

interruption of all intercourse with the Chinese Empire.*

But farther, the whole of this measure appears to me to be a departure, on the part of Ministers, from their implied agreement with the East India Company, which professed to found the renewal of their Charter, on the principles of the Acts of 1784 and 1793. It is also, in its two ulterior ramifications, a complete deviation from the principles upon which the negociation between Lord Melville and the East India Company, had begun and proceeded. It is even directly repugnant and contradictory to his Lordship's consent to the sixth proposition of the Court of Directors, namely, that "the whole of the Indian Trade should be brought to the *Port of London*, and the goods sold at the Company's sales."

This mode of proceeding, would seem to convey no very unequivocal intimation that the East India Company are not considered as possessing any rights, beyond what may suit the views of expediency of his Majesty's Ministers, for the time being, to permit them to retain; although I do not imagine that such a proposition will be asserted by them in terms. Of this, more hereafter.

* Since the above was written, this point appears to have been abandoned by his Majesty's Ministers.—*Vide Papers respecting the negociation for a renewal of the East India Company's Exclusive Privileges, p.* 170.

But even if the East India Company were deemed to possess no positive rights, the evils which the Court of Directors have shewn, by a series of the most enlightened reasoning, founded upon their long experience, and an intimate knowledge of facts, must result to the Company, to the revenue, and to the Empire, from the meditated change, ought, in my opinion, to be sufficient to induce Ministers to pause, and reconsider their determination. It behoves them to reflect, that, unless they can call into their service a degree of ingenuity that is altogether supernatural,---by which the prevention of colonization, and of smuggling, can be rendered compatible with permission to Private Ships, of all sorts and sizes, to trade to India, and to enter the out-ports of these Kingdoms,---they will subject themselves to the imputation of making a rash and ill-considered experiment, of yielding to a senseless and unfounded clamour, and of courting a hollow popularity. If, besides, it should appear that the East India Company are actually possessed of positive rights, it would be to incur a dreadful responsibility, to introduce innovations, *prima facie* no less injurious and unjust towards that great body, than in their immediate and obvious consequences, palpably pregnant with calamity to the whole Empire.

It is difficult not to be persuaded that, in this matter, Ministers, as they cannot be supposed to have meditated the ruin of the East India Company

by a side wind, have not acted from conviction; but that they have allowed their better judgments to be borne down by the clamours of certain petitioners, who know not the consequences of what they are demanding, or that they have timidly yielded to a presumed necessity arising from the pressure of the times. This, however, is matter of little consequence; for we are not enquiring into motives, but effects. The laying open the trade to India to the out-ports, has been aptly denominated a question of existence with the East India Company. But it is also calculated to affect no less vitally that portion of the public revenue, which depends upon the regular India Trade: and, in its ultimate consequences, even the integrity and safety of the British empire. On this question, his Majesty's Ministers have shewn much inconsistency. They expressly declare their conviction, "that the great interests of *policy* and of *revenue*, as well as of the *East India Company*," require, "that the *existing restraints* respecting the intercourse with China should continue; and that the exclusive Trade in *Tea* should be preserved to the Company." Yet the direct, and almost immediate effect of the measure, which they *now* propose, would be, according to the best judgment of those who have most knowledge of the subject, to destroy every vestige of those exclusive privileges, which they thus admit to be necessary to the policy of the Empire at large!

It has already been fully demonstrated, in the celebrated Letter of Messrs. Grant and Parry, and in the subsequent correspondence of the Court of Directors with the Board of Controul, and is indeed universally acknowledged by those who are acquainted with the subject in all its bearings, that the continuance of an exclusive trade to China, or even of intercourse with that country, is altogether incompatible with the admission of private ships to the trade of India, especially if their burthen should be discretionary, if they should have access there to the Molucca Islands, and to the out-ports of these Kingdoms upon their return.

It is in fact the opinion of many, that should this measure, with its various ramifications, be persisted in by Ministers, it would be utterly impossible that the Company should go on for any length of time: and that it would be much more advisable now to begin to wind up their concern, than be obliged to do so a few years hence, under still more unfavourable circumstances, and with more impoverished means.

It has been shewn, that the immediate consequences of the competition, which would arise, not so much from the fair as from the clandestine trader, under colour of this commerce, would be, an abridgment of the Company's sales, and a sinking of their finances. Events which would soon be followed by the necessity of relinquishing their great establishments; of laying up their vast fleets, now the means of transporting troops and stores, as well as of de-

fending their commerce; and of abandoning their buildings, wharfs, warehouses, and other articles of dead stock, formed at a prodigious expence, and suited only to the Indian Trade, which had so long been their's, all of which would, in such case, become useless and deserted! With the decline of the Company, would be thrown out of activity and employ, twenty-one millions of capital, 1400 commanders and officers, 8000 seamen, 12000 tradesmen, 3000 labourers, and seventy-eight of the finest ships in the world, many of them fit to take their station in line of battle with the British Navy!

The practice of using the *port of London* only, for the East India Trade, which has existed since the first institution of the Company, has been productive of advantages too numerous and too well defined to admit of being relinquished upon the mere presumption of uncertain or remote benefits. The custom of selling their imports, at stated periods, by public auction, has been nearly coeval with the Company. These sales are open, honourable and satisfactory; and are resorted to, with confidence, by the Merchants of the Continent of Europe, as well as by those of Great Britain. So high indeed is the character of the Company with foreign merchants, that purchases have been made by them "on the faith merely of the descriptive marks; and goods (thus marked), on their arrival on the Continent, frequently pass through various hands, before they are finally unpacked." The in-

juries and frauds, to which an alteration in this mode, consecrated by the practice of centuries, would necessarily give rise, may be readily conceived.

For the security of the revenue arising from the Trade to India, as has been well observed by the Deputation of the Court of Directors, "nothing so effectual could be devised as to bring the *imports* to *one place;* to have them lodged under the keys of the Government Officers; to have them sold publicly in the presence of those officers; and finally to have the duties (upwards of four millions *per annum*);* thus carefully ascertained, collected through the medium of the Company, and with *hardly any charge* to government! In short," say they, "the present system affords the most complete provision that can be imagined against defect, fraud, or expence, in realizing this branch of the revenue to the Public."

Although we may not be able to say to what precise degree the measure of laying open the Trade to India to private ships, might, in its least noxious operation, immediately affect this branch of the public revenue; there can be no doubt that, by the partial fulfilment of the evils apprehended, it would be considerably injured, and by their total fulfilment destroyed.

* £4,213,425, according to the returns of last year.

It cannot, independently of these considerations, be supposed to make any difference to the East India Company, whether the Trade to India be carried on exclusively from the port of London, or from that of Bristol, Liverpool, or Glasgow; or indiscriminately from all the ports of the United Kingdom. But, since the dangers to be apprehended from the innovations proposed, are as obvious and as well founded as they are great and alarming, it is a duty which that body owe to themselves and to the nation not to submit to them without a struggle.

Accordingly, it was with a spirit fully justified by the occasion, that Sir Hugh Inglis, the present Chairman of the Court of Directors, in a conference with Lord Buckinghamshire, declared it "as his opinion, that the Court of Directors, in the first instance, and the Court of Proprietors, when laid before them, would resist, by every means in their power, a measure so fatal to the vital interests of the Company and to the public revenue as would be the measure of allowing the ships of individuals to import into any place but the *port of London*;" adding, that "situated as he was, he should consider it his duty to resist, and to recommend to the Court of Directors, and ultimately to the Proprietors, to resist the proposition."

And this overwhelming ruin, it seems, is to be brought upon the East India Company, and those connected with them, not only without the offer, but without the smallest chance or prospect of indemni-

fication. Nay, after they should have suffered themselves, as a matter of right, to be tamely despoiled of their commercial, they might prepare to surrender their territorial privileges at discretion. Into the nature of their rights to both, and to consequent indemnity upon the deprivation of either, I shall take occasion more fully to inquire.

And for what beneficial purpose, for what grand object, is this sum of ruin, or even the risk of it, to be incurred? In order (supposing the best, and that the communication with China should not be interrupted), to transfer the *same* quantity of oriental commerce from London to the out-ports, and from the East India Company to private Merchants! These are the sole objects for which such mighty innovations are now to be attempted; for which a concern that has subsisted for ages, and so succeeded as to be the wonder and envy of the world, is to be subverted and destroyed: and that too on the instigation, or hypothetical reasoning of persons, who erroneously expect, to procure to themselves extraordinary advantages, from a participation in the Trade of which they would deprive the Company.

The only result of any importance to the Public, which we are promised from this innovation, is altogether visionary and fallacious. It is well known to those who are acquainted with India, that the Trade, in European commodities, to that country, is wholly, or almost wholly incapable of being ex-

tended. The reverse of this proposition, which is the very first point to be adjusted in this controversy, has been invariably taken for granted, instead of being deliberately examined and decided: and upon this flimsy foundation has been raised the flimsy superstructure of the advocates of what has been called the "Open Trade."

The manufactures of Great Britain, which are annually exported to India, are almost exclusively consumed by the Europeans resident in that country: and until these become much more numerous than they are at present, which can only happen in consequence of colonization, the demand for such articles cannot be extended, but in a very inconsiderable degree. This incapability of extension, which depends upon the peculiar, and almost unchangeable character of the natives of Asia, is a fact too notorious to admit of being denied, or explained away by the abstract reasonings of political œconomists. To the state of India, at least, their principles cannot for ages apply. This has been set forth, in a clear, satisfactory, and convincing manner, by Messrs. Grant and Parry, in their Letter of April 1809, and in the correspondence of the successive Chairmen of the Court of Directors, since that period, with the President of the Board of Controul, on the subject of the renewal of the Company's Charter. Referring the reader, who wishes to be fully acquainted with the details, to those very able

documents, I shall content myself here with stating a few simple but strong facts, which, in my humble apprehension, it is impossible to reconcile to a contrary conclusion.

Of the three thousand tons *per annum*, which the Company are bound, by the act of 1793, to retain for the accommodation of private traders, not above 1200 tons annually, on an average of eighteen years, have been claimed, or little more than one third: and of this 1200 tons, 430, or more than one third, were wine and beer, which articles are consumed by Europeans almost exclusively.

Had there been a demand for any greater quantity of goods than is annually exported by the Company, by the commanders and officers of their ships, and by the private traders admitted under the act of 1793, amounting in all to about two millions sterling, the remainder of the tonnage allowed to private traders by that act would surely have been claimed. This, by the genius of commerce, I hold to be conclusive evidence.

That this tonnage was not claimed, then, shews demonstratively that there has not been, since 1793, an increasing demand, to any extent, for the European articles of consumption, used either by the European or native inhabitants of India. Those consumed by the natives, it is well known, are few and inconsiderable. With such, however, as they have occasion for, they are abundantly supplied by the

agency of private traders, resident in the East, whose industry embraces all the ports, to which the commerce of the Company does not extend. This, when carried on by sea, is called the country, or coasting trade. But it also extends its ramifications by land, to the most minute portions of the interior of Asia. And the knowledge and experience of those concerned in it would surely leave nothing of any great value for rivals, fresh from Europe, to explore.

It has been a grievous accusation against the East India Company, that they have neglected to cultivate the trade to several parts within their limits, and prevented the export of our manufactures to "some of the largest and richest regions of the world," where, say the complainants, "there is reason to believe the private merchant might, in the course of an open trade, increase his profits *twenty-fold and upwards.*" The parts here more especially alluded to, are the Eastern coasts of Africa, the coasts of the Gulfs of Arabia and Persia, and the shores of the Red Sea. But, besides the proofs arising from the recorded efforts of the Company, even in early times, to extend the sale of British manufactures in those quarters, a sufficient refutation of this charge is to be found in its absurdity. Were it even possible to believe that the East India Company would have been so blind to their interests, as to have neglected a commerce, which would have

increased their profits "twenty-fold or upwards," it could never be credited that the same indifference to their worldly concerns would have affected the individual traders of the East, unless it be also believed that the climate of India possesses the quality of lessening, or destroying the ordinary cupidity of man. Of late times at least, these traders have existed in sufficient numbers to pervade every nook and corner of Asia: and it is not very probable that all of them would have overlooked so favourable an opportunity of speedily making their fortunes. It is notorious that all the attempts, which have been made, to extend the sale of European commodities in India, formerly by the Dutch and Portuguese, at all times by the East India Company, and latterly by American private traders, have failed. Where the efforts of the merchants of those several nations, both in a corporate and individual capacity, and possessing the benefit of great experience, have so long and so uniformly failed, by what species of magic is it that British individual traders, without experience, can now be expected to establish a lucrative trade?

The Americans, who eagerly explored every avenue to trade in India, were only able, in the six most flourishing years of their commerce, to export to that country £667,634 in merchandize and manufactures, including those of their own country; while, in bullion, they exported during the same

period £4,543,662.* As the profits upon goods, had there been a demand for them, would have been much greater than on bullion, that the quantity of bullion was seven-eighths, and of goods only one-eighth of their whole exports to India, affords an incontrovertible inference that for the latter they found little or no demand. The reason is quite obvious. The consumption of European commodities is almost exclusively confined to European residents. The Company export annually upwards of a million sterling of goods and stores, the commanders and officers of their ships nearly half a million more, and the private traders, admitted by the act of 1793, about £400,000. This supply, amounting to about two millions annually, appears to be adequate to the demand of all the Europeans in India; and the market is even frequently over-stocked. At the present rate of the increase of European inhabitants, this commerce can admit but of a very inconsiderable and a very slow extension; a shackle not to be removed but by a worse evil, the admission of European colonization in India.

It has been already shewn that the almost unchangeable character of the natives forms a lasting, if not an insuperable, bar to any considerable or rapid extension of the sale of European manufactures

* Vide Papers respecting the Negociation for the renewal of the East India Company's exclusive Privileges, p.

among them. Consequently it cannot be matter of surprize that the experiment of sending unusual quantities of European goods to India, as if the demand could be increased in proportion to the supply, should have failed, as often as it has been tried; always bringing along with it the ruin of the adventurers.

This experiment was made as far back as the time of Cromwell. Individual speculators, and associations of merchants, as Courten's Association, the Assada merchants, and the Merchant Adventurers, traded to India, at that period, under licenses or commissions from the Protector.* The progress and the fate of these speculations were uniform. They injured the East India Company, by raising the price, and creating a scarcity of goods in India, as well as by importing a superabundance, and lowering the value of them at home. The competition also occasioned a glut of European goods, and consequently a loss upon them in the Indian market. And accordingly these adventurers were all either ruined by their speculations, or, in order to avoid ruin, forced to seek an union with the East India Company.†

In the same manner was terminated the career

* *Vide Bruce's Annals of the Honourable East India Company, Vol. I. pp.* 435 *and* 508.

† *Ibid. Vol. I. p.* 572.

of other bodies of men, who subsequently entered into competition with the East India Company. From the time of Queen Elizabeth to the end of the seventeenth century, the commercial rights of this body were, at various other periods, as well as in the time of Cromwell, violated in the most scandalous and illegal manner. They were opposed by licenses from the Crown to private traders, contrary to the Charters and Privileges, which the Crown itself had granted; and those private traders, in sharing all the benefits of the commerce, were exempt from every charge or expenditure for establishments at home and abroad. By a still more outrageous violation of their rights, several years before the expiration of their Charter, a new Company was established, towards the end of the seventeenth century, under the denomination of "the *English* East India Company;" when the original Company, for the sake of distinction, assumed the title of "The *London* East India Company." After a struggle of several years, which materially injured the original Company, and almost wholly ruined the new one, this, like all former rivals, was obliged to seek its safety in an union. And hence arose, in 1707-8, that splendid body which now exists, under the appellation of "The *United* East India Company."

The history of the rivalship of these two Companies, before their union, and of the fate of some private speculators, who, under the constitution of

the new Company, had claimed a right of trading on their individual stock, both illustrates and confirms the fact, that competition in the East India Trade ever has been, and, while the character of the natives of India remains unaltered, must continue to be productive of loss to the adventurers, without being attended with a single essential benefit to the public.*

An experiment with similar, but more decisive results, was made in 1788-9, from Ostend, by persons, among others, who had been in the habits of dealing, as tradesmen, with the Commanders and Officers of the Company's Ships, and who might be supposed to have acquired a knowledge of the nature of the business in which they were embarking, at least considerably greater than can be possessed by the Merchants and Manufacturers, who have recently been petitioning the Legislature for permission to send Ships to India; or, in other words, for permission to ruin themselves, and to injure the East India Company. This trade was carried on under Imperial colours. And it must be in the recollection of every one, who was then in the Company's Sea Service, of every person who was resident at any of the Presidencies of India, and in general of all men of observation at that time connected with the East, in common with the

* For the history of this rivalship, *see Bruce's Annals of the Honourable East India Company, passim.*

suffering adventurers, what an extensive scene of ruin ensued. Many kinds of European Commodities were sold at from 50 to 75 *per cent.* discount; and even at that price but a very small quantity of what was imported could obtain a sale. The Commanders and Officers of the Company's Ships, and all others who were regularly engaged in the trade, were deeply injured by the competition of these interlopers; and most of themselves were irremediably ruined. I recollect hearing of one case, in which the product of the cargo was said not to be sufficient to pay the freight from Ostend; and the payment of it was successfully resisted in the Supreme Court of Judicature in Calcutta, on the ground of the transaction being illegal.

We have at this moment before our eyes an example of something similar in the fate of the commercial adventurers to Buenos Ayres, and other parts of South America. Although the impediments to the extension of sale for European Commodities, are not, in that country, either so complete or of so permanent a nature as in India, it is but too well known that most of the adventurers, who recently embarked in that trade, have been impoverished or ruined by the speculation; and that the manufactures of this country are now daily sold at auction at very reduced prices. Yet the expectations that were generally entertained of the immense benefits that would immediately be derived from the opening of so vast a field to commercial in-

tercourse, as the Continent of South America, have even been greater than those which were formed from an Open Trade to India. There is, however, this wide difference between the two cases, that, with respect to South America, there were no public interests to balance, no privileges to infringe, no rights to invade, no property to violate, before the private trader could have permission to ruin himself, if he pleased. Nay, there being no law to that effect, he could not be prevented from trading with South America, except by the constituted authorities of that country.

There are also other instances in point. At various periods, it has been deemed expedient to allow ships built in India to export cargoes of Rice, and other Commodities, to Britain. And the Commanders and Owners of these Ships being persons of experience, not choosing to invest cargoes here, upon which they would suffer an undoubted loss in India, have generally preferred returning in ballast.

In 1798, when Government, owing to the scarcity of grain which then prevailed, gave encouragement to private Merchants to send Ships to India for Rice, those who availed themselves of that liberty, were considerable losers by the adventure. And it afterwards cost Government a large sum of money to indemnify them.

Thus, by the uniform results of all the experiments which have been made, the impossibility of

giving any considerable extension to the trade to India, appears to be placed beyond a doubt. What then would be the consequences to the adventurers themselves, naturally to be expected from permitting an unlimited intercourse with that country, by private ships? One of the most immediate consequences would be that goods to the amount of perhaps twenty times more than there is a demand for, would be exported from Great Britain to India. Of this amount, nineteen-twentieths would remain on hand, to be returned to Europe at a double expence of freight and insurance, or to rot in the warehouses of India; while even the one-twentieth, for which there might be a demand, would, from the glut in the market, necessarily be sold greatly below prime cost. It must be, therefore, by singular caution and singular intelligence, or extreme good fortune, that any of the private adventurers, who might rashly embark in such a traffic, should escape being ruined. The Commanders and Officers of the Company's Ships, and consequently the tradesmen with whom they deal, would largely participate in the general calamity. Even the Company could not fail to suffer essential injury from so disastrous a competition. With respect to the Manufacturers, they would remain unpaid, to the extent of more than nineteen-twentieths of the goods sold, unless the adventurers could pay them out of their private fortunes. And all these evils would be unaccompanied, and uncompensated for, by any ul-

timate increase in the quantity of British Manufactures consumed in, or exported to, India. On the contrary, in some instances the exports might be expected to diminish. The article of Tin, for instance, which the Company have usually exported at a loss from Cornwall, might be procured at Malacca, Banca, and other parts of India, at a cheaper rate, for the supply of the China market. And with respect to Woollens, what individual Merchants could, or would, like the Company, sacrifice £.50,000 annually, on this article alone, in order to encourage to the utmost the manufactures of the country? These are sacrifices, which, if the trade were laid open to private Ships, the Company could not be expected, even if they were able, to continue.

Supposing the intercourse with China, notwithstanding this measure, to remain uninterrupted, and the usual qnantities of these articles to continne in demand, could the gentlemen of Cornwall and the manufacturers of Woollens, rationally expect from private adventurers equal liberality in prices, or punctuality in payments, as they have always experienced from the East India Company? Most certainly not: but, on the contrary, confusion, disappointment, and loss to all parties would inevitably ensue. Many years must elapse, and an extensive scene of ruin take place, before the trade, thus circumstanced, could find its level; i. e. before it could return to its original state. It is, therefore, obvious

that the distresses of the mercantile and manufacturing bodies, which it seemed in part to be the professed intention of this measure to relieve, would be thereby highly aggravated.

I shall here cite a few historical facts, which will aptly illustrate the pernicious consequences, on the markets both in India and Britain, which must flow from the unlimited intercourse of private Ships between the two countries. They will also incidentally shew the incapability, arising from the allotment of certain casts of the natives of India to particular occupations, of increasing the products of industry in that country, to correspond with any great or sudden increase of demand.

The Merchant Adventurers, who, in 1656-7, traded to India, under licenses or commissions, from Cromwell, in writing to their Commanders and Factors, on the low state of the markets for Indian produce in England, informs them "that the number of disconnected interlopers, or private Merchants, had much increased; and that they had brought home great quantities of Indian Commodities, of *inferior* quality, particularly Cottons, Drugs, and Spices, which had *overstocked the market.*" *

They are also complained of in their turn by the Servants of the Company. For we are told, that

* *Vide Bruce's Annals of the East India Company.—Vol. I. p.* 521.

" the interferences of the supercargoes and shipping of the Merchant Adventurers *had rendered the purchase of investments almost impracticable*: these private, but *now authorized* traders, had brought out large quantities of English Goods, and sold them *below prime cost*, and with the money, with which they had been entrusted, had given *high prices* for such Indian articles as they had collected." * These are the complaints of the Company's Servants at Surat.

From Fort St. George, they complain that the Merchant Adventurers had " sold their European imports at *low rates*, and bought Indian Articles at *advanced prices*, which had rendered it impracticable to conform to the orders of the Court, to purchase an investment of the finest goods, that would yield a profit to the proprietors. The Ships of the Adventurers had touched, and made purchases at the ports of Negapatnam, Porto Novo, and Tranquebar, and, by exorbitant prices, had drained the country of goods; which had reduced the Presidency to the necessity of purchasing such Coast Cloths, and such proportions of Pepper and Spices, as could be collected at Bantam, to make up a small investment for Europe.†

These extracts abundantly prove, that, under a competition of private speculators, the Indian mar-

* *Vide Bruce's Annals of the East India Company, Vol. I. p.* 523.

† *Ibid. p.* 525.

kets were glutted with European Goods, which, it being impracticable to extend their consumption, were sold below prime cost, to the loss or ruin of the importer. That these private Merchants bought Indian Commodities at exorbitant prices, and drained the country of goods; shewing that a considerable increased demand for the Manufactures of India cannot be quickly supplied, but by a deterioration of their quality. And that, with these goods, they overstocked the European market. By each of these three operations, those adventurers must be presumed to have lost; and, by their competition, to have occasioned a loss to the East India Company, as well as, by their inability to discharge their obligations, to have injured the tradesmen, with whom they might have dealt on credit in this country.

Now, until the character of the inhabitants of India shall have undergone a considerable alteration, a similar competition must again produce similar results. Were the trade to India laid open to morrow to private ships, the effects of that measure upon the markets, both at home and abroad, would necessarily be almost precisely such as have been described. To all who might be concerned in this traffic, it would be but a competition for priority of ruin; and without the consolation of a single incidental benefit arising from it to either country.

With respect to Great Britain, in a view of the balance of trade, I cannot help thinking that these

changes, in so far as their influence might go, could not but be unfavourable. The benefits to India would be but partial and trifling, as they would be limited to those particular tribes, who manufacture the fabrics in demand; and these advantages would be more than connterbalanced by incidental evils. The number of these manufacturers could not be increased on any emergency, and consequently their supply could not be augmented to the level of an unusual demand, but by the deterioration of their commodities. Colonization, or a change from other causes in the character of the natives, must make considerable progress, before we can expect to see the use of machinery introduced among them. Yet some of the petitioners for *the right of open trade,* at the last renewal of the Company's Charter, solicited that the natives of India *might not be allowed the use of machinery!* Such is human consistency.

The objections already urged against the admission of private ships to trade from Britain to India, will of course apply, with equal force, to the admission of private ships, built in India, and not in the Company's service, to trade from India to Britain. This interference would have precisely the effects upon the markets of both countries, which have been already described. Ships of this description would experience much difficulty in finding cargoes for Europe; and they would be obliged to return to India, with scarcely any other

article than specie, and ballast. It is true that in years of scarcity in this country, ships built in India have, by special permission and encouragement, been allowed to import rice to England. But, even under these unusual circumstances, they were suffered to unload at the port of London only; they were all of a certain tonnage, and their cargoes were sold at the Company's regular sales; by which means they were rendered, in a considerable degree, subject to the jurisdiction of the Company.

The fate of the adventurers, who might embark in this speculation, excepting in so far as they might be secured by the profits of a rice cargo in a period of great scarcity, would be similar to those, who might fit out private ships from Europe. As far as they might confine themselves to a fair trade, they would be losers both by the outward and homeward cargoes: and they could only to a certainty calculate on the amount of their freight.

Thus, without any public benefit either to India or Britain, the immediate and obvious consequences of the measure in question, would be a grievous injury, and injustice to the East India Company; an enormous loss to the British revenue; the ruin of every individual who might engage in a competition of fair trade; an irresistible encouragement to smuggling; and detriment to the consumer, by the certain deterioration of all the commodities of the East.

From this immense change, the illicit trader

alone would derive benefit. By the retail consumer, the fall in the price of the commodities of the East in Europe, and of the commodities of Europe in the East, although sufficient to ruin the wholesale importer, would scarcely be felt as an advantage. With respect to the commodities of India, the difference would be more than compensated by the deterioration to which every article would be subject, in India from the competition in the market, and in Europe, in passing through the hands of the clandestine trader, or in the progress of irregular sales. At present, the consumer has the certainty of procuring articles of unquestionable goodness, and at a price unquestionably fair, at the Company's public sales. How differently might he be served, if cast for his supply upon the cupidity, specious pretences, or chicane, of thousands of individual importers and dealers? With respect to tea especially, the revival of smuggling might be expected again to introduce, as formerly, a spurious, fraudulent, and deleterious article. From such a change, then, the consumer, or the public, in Great Britain, could not be in any degree benefited, but might be considerably incommoded.

With respect to European commodities, the diminution of their retail prices, which a competition would occasion in India, although attended by irreparable loss to the wholesale importer, could be no object to the wealthy European inhabitants of that country, who are their principal consumers.

Nor can the trifling diminution in the price of

tonnage, which might take place in consequence of admitting private ships into the trade, be an object worthy of consideration to the importer or consumer, were not the measure otherwise fraught with the dangers, which have been so fully set forth. This will appear from a comparison of the freight paid by the East India Company, with that which was formerly paid to private ships from Ostend.*

I shall not insist here on the facility, which would arise from the admission of private ships to the trade of India, of clandestinely supplying an enemy with salt-petre in time of war, or on the approach of war, both because it is too obvious to require elucidation, and because the temptations would be notoriously too great to admit of prevention.

From all that has been said, I trust it has been rendered evident, that the benefits which some mercantile and manufacturing bodies, in this country have promised to themselves, from the admission of private ships to the trade of India, is nothing but a mere delusion, and a delusion too of the most dangerous kind. If, however, it could, on the contrary, be shewn, that such a measure would be attended with the most unequivocal advantages to these bodies of men, with what colour of justice, or of decency, it may be asked, could the East India Company be on that account deprived, without a compensation, of that most essential portion of

* *Vide Bruce's Report of the Negotiation between the East India Company and the Public, &c. p.* 63.

their privileges, which has been shewn to be the safeguard of the remainder?

Upon the subject of the rights of the Company, much misapprehension, and some designed suppression of the truth appear to have taken place.

Some of the advocates for an Open Trade, have chosen to represent the expiration of the Company's exclusive privileges, as the termination of a lease, or the repassing of rights back from the East India Company to the Nation. This is, however, by no means a just analogy, or a fair representation. The privileges of commerce, and the right to territory in the East, were not originally *vested* in the Nation, and therefore could not, as a matter of course, be resumed by it. They are *acquired* by the wisdom, and the treasure of the Company; and by the valour of their armies. They were, consequently, not of the nature of a leasehold property, which, at the expiration of an appointed period, reverts to the owner, and may in justice be disposed of by him, for another term of years, to the highest bidder. The property of the Company is more of the nature of a freehold, which cannot in justice be taken away, but for the essential accommodation of the public, distinctly and unequivocally ascertained, and that by a regular process fixed, if not expressly by law, at least by the acknowledged principles of the laws of this Country. These laws require, that, when the owner of an estate is to be deprived of any part of his property, for the benefit and convenience of the public, as in making high roads and bridges,

he should be amply indemnified, and that by the verdict of a jury of his countrymen. Now this verdict must, in justice, be founded on what it may rationally be presumed the property would bring to the owner at a fair sale. This analogy, although correct as far as it goes, is however, by no means complete. For where can we find a jury capable of estimating, upon any ascertained or familiar principles, the value of the East India Company's territories, and of the trade which depends upon them? We may, indeed, form some faint idea of their value by supposing what would be bid for them by the crowned heads of Europe, if set up to public auction. The price offered, we may readily conceive, would be immense; and such would be the only just criterion of their true value.

But what indemnity has been offered to the Company for the exclusive privilege of trade, or rather of employing shipping, to India, of which it is now proposed to deprive them? Has it never, for a moment occurred to those Petitioners who are so anxious for participation in their trade, that its existence depends upon the territorial dominion and influence of the Company; that it has cost them immense sums to establish it on its present extensive and flourishing scale; or that it might not be unreasonable to offer them some small compensation for the privilege which they were required to relinquish? This privilege I hold to be their undoubted property, as much as their territories in India, or

their freeholds in Britain; a property of which they cannot justly be deprived by any power or authority, without an adequate remuneration. But what can be an adequate remuneration, short of the whole value of their property, for that part of it, by the relinquishment of which it has been shewn that all their remaining privileges would be, not simply endangered, but certainly lost?

Were it, however, agreed that the East India Company should be in the first instance fully indemnified, for their territory, trade, and property of every denomination; and were a jury appointed capable of estimating upon fair grounds, the value of that property; it would next be necessary to consider from what sources the Crown, or his Majesty's Ministers, could draw the amount required for the purchase, having, moreover, first proved the utility to the public, of the intended transfer, before they could, in justice or propriety, propose that the Company should be deprived of their exclusive privileges.

It is, I believe, universally admitted, that the Company have a positive and absolute right to their Forts, Factories, Warehouses, Docks, Ships, and Stock of every denomination; and that these were all acquired precisely in the same manner in which they acquired their Territory and Trade; *i. e.* by labour, negociation, or purchase. Now, it would be a curious position to hold, and I should like to see the arguments, or to hear the authorities by

which it might be supported, that they have not an equal right, or that they have no right at all, to those different kinds of property.

With respect to the Sovereignty of India, which it has been asserted that the Crown has the right, without any public necessity, and without an equivalent, to *resume*, or more correctly, to *appropriate*, let me ask whether it was upon such a principle that the Duke of Athol was divested of the Sovereignty of the Isle of Man? No. A regular negociation took place, and he was paid £100,000 for it! And if the Sovereignty of the Isle of Man be estimated at £100,000, what may be the value of that of British India? These considerations might have merited some little attention.

That the Legislature have the power, without any public necessity, and even without remuneration, of depriving the East India Company of that part of their exclusive privileges, which has been shewn to be the bulwark and support of the remainder, as they are supreme, I do not question. But as they are just, I should be infinitely surprised, if a mere clamour, not even popular, but arising from the misguided selfishness of a few commercial and manufacturing bodies, could have the effect of inducing them, whatever may be the decision of his Majesty's Ministers, for a moment to entertain the notion that so dangerous, or rather so fatal a measure, can possibly be expedient.

While the evils which would inevitably result from the measure of laying open the Trade to India, in the manner proposed, are obvious to every one, the benefits, which would arise from it, are considered as doubtful by the best informed upon the subject, even of the very Ministers who have proposed it. That Lord Melville is against the measure of admitting the ships of private Merchants into the India Trade, appears sufficiently evident from the following paragraph of his Letter to the Chairs, dated the 20th of March, 1812:—"You will do me the *justice* to recollect, that in all our discussions on this subject, both recently and on former occasions, the admission of *the ships* of Merchants in this country into the trade of India, in concurrence with those of the Company, has never been urged as a measure from which much immediate benefit would, in my opinion, be derived, either to the *country*, or to the *individuals* who might embark in the speculation; and I certainly am not without *considerable apprehensions* that at least, on the first opening of the Trade, the Public expectation as to the British territories in India affording any considerable outlet for British manufactures, beyond the amount of our *present exports*, may be *disappointed*." This declaration, although expressed with the reserve of a statesman, distinctly manifests the opinion of that Minister who must be presumed to be the best acquainted with the affairs of India. And the removal of Lord Melville, shortly after the date of this

letter from the Board of Controul, as well as the extension of the permission to private ships to sail from and to the out-ports of this Kingdom, which had never till then been proposed, are no unequivocal proofs that, in respect to this extraordinary measure, he was overruled in the Cabinet; and that he did not find it consistent either with his own dignity, or with his implied engagements with the Court of Directors, any longer to remain in a situation in which he could neither support the one or fulfil the other.

His Majesty's Ministers must have been aware, that they could not, with safety to their situations, have proposed, in a direct manner, any essential change in the territorial government. To transfer it to the Crown, as has been sometimes talked of, or to vest it in Commissioners for life, as once proposed by Mr. Fox, would at this day be almost universally reprobated, as fraught with the most dangerous consequences to the Constitution of the country. Ministers have therefore deemed it most expedient, under the inadmissible conditions already stated, to propose to leave the territorial government of the Indian Empire, as at present, under the immediate management of the East India Company, through its executive organ, the Court of Directors. It would also be dangerous, they found, to disturb too openly the course of the China Trade: and this too, for that reason, they have proposed, apparently, to leave to the Company. It does not indeed appear,

that, independent of necessity, considerations of justice have been allowed any weight in favour of the claims of this great and powerful body. It seems rather to have been the determination, that the Company should be ruined, either indirectly, by the acceptance of conditions, which would eventually occasion the loss both of their trade and territories, or directly, by a rejection of them, which would supply Ministers with a pretext of transferring to the Crown the power and the patronage of India.

It could scarcely, I think, have been imagined, that the East India Company could have thought it a boon to be allowed to retain merely that portion of their privileges which it might suit the fluctuating expediency of his Majesty's Ministers to leave to them; or that they could receive with deference and submission, any conditions which they might be pleased to annex to their introducing into Parliament a proposition for the renewal of the Charter.

On the contrary, I am well persuaded there is not, at this moment, an individual Member of that Body who would not much rather relinquish at once the whole of their privileges to the Public,—stock, territory, buildings, shipping, and trade,—at a fair valuation, than to have their Charter renewed, for an additional period, in a mutilated and unsafe state. But it was not meant that a choice should be left them; and it is now intimated, not in very measured terms, that Ministers will not on any

other conditions than those they have already stated, propose to Parliament a renewal of their Charter.

It will then remain to be seen whether the Company have no means of introducing into Parliament a measure for the preservation of their rights and privileges than through the medium of his Majesty's present Ministers. If not, it must be admitted, that the affairs of the nation are to be regarded as henceforth entirely dependent upon the will and pleasure of the servants of the crown.

Much has been said, by the opponents of the Company, of the absurdity of Merchants being sovereigns; of their being plunged in debt and approaching towards ruin: and of the government of India being a solicism in politics,—an *imperium in imperio.*

For the truth of the remark, that their interests as Merchants have been not only perfectly compatible with their interests as sovereigns, but that these characters have respectively aided each other, we may adduce the high authority of the late Lord Melville, than whom no man of his time had a more complete knowledge of the affairs of India. "By the commercial capital of the Company at *home*," says this able statesman, "acting in connection with the public revenues under their administration abroad, they have mutually aided and administered to the wants of each other; and the result has been, the fortunate achievement of those brilliant events, upon the success of which depended the *existence* of the

government, the territorial wealth, and the Trade of India."

During the whole period of the present Charter, the political has been invariably debtor to the commercial concern of the Company. But they have also mutually aided each other. As the territorial revenues have been frequently applied to purposes of commercial investment, so have the returns of commerce been rendered subservient to military and political operations.

With respect to the debt of the East India Company, when it is considered that their permanent debt in India and in Europe is only between 28 and 29 millions;* that the population of their territories is 60 millions; and the gross annual revenue 16 millions; it will appear comparatively small, and even insignificant. It is only at the rate of 10*s.* a head for each individual of the population, while that of Great Britain is at the rate of £60 a head; being as one to one hundred and twenty. The East India Company's affairs, then, so far from being in a state to create despondency, as has been so frequently and so erroneously asserted, may be said to be in a most flourishing condition. The actual state of their territories is such as to leave no apprehensions of expensive or permanent hostility with

* £28,614,174.

the native powers; and Lord Minto, the present enlightened Governor-General, has recently conveyed to the Court of Directors assurances of his confident expectations, not only of bringing the expenditure within the income, but of realizing a large surplus revenue beyond the ordinary expences in time of peace. From all this, it appears most manifest, not only that the apprehensions of the insolvency of the Company, so often expressed in and out of Parliament, have been either wholly feigned, or have arisen from a total ignorance of their real situation; but that, on the contrary, they are in a state not to be shaken, but by some great and unexpected convulsion, or by the adoption of some such destructive measure as that with which they are now threatened.

Since 1793, both the population and the revenues of the Company's territories have been almost trebled* and the duties on their Import Trade to Britain have augmented in at least a similar ratio.† Their annual exports from this country are now £2,320,000; their tonnage 101,797 tons. If this

* In 1793, the revenue of India, on an average of three years, amounted to £6,897,730. Bruce's Report, &c. p. 47. It is now sixteen millions.

† In 1793, the Duties on the Company's Import Trade exceeded one million (Bruce, p. 46): it now exceeds four.

be impending ruin, it is of a nature of which it is not usual to complain.

As to the system of Indian government being an *imperium in imperio*, which must mean, if it means any thing, that it is incompatible with the constitution with the constitution of this country, I would ask, were any defence necessary, are not the British laws extended to the inhabitants of India, in as full a measure as their situation will allow? Are they not as well administered even as at home? And is not the condition of the natives of that country, who are under the dominion of the Company, as enviable as that of the inhabitants of any portion of the globe? I will add more so: and those persons would not be their friends, who might advise that the highest parts of the British constitution, should be prematurely extended to them.

I am not aware that any objections worthy of notice, to a renewal of the Company's exclusive privileges, for another term of years, have been left unanswered. I do not, however, think that, in the course of the discussions which have taken place on this subject, the Company's rights, and the injustice of violating those rights, without a palpable benefit to the public, and a full indemnification to themselves, have been always sufficiently insisted on. At no period of the monarchy, from the granting of their Charter by Queen Elizabeth, to the protectorate of Cromwell, nor even by that usurper, were

the Company's rights to their forts, factories, or privileges of trade, called into question.* Nor does it appear how, by the subsequent extension of territory and trade, which they effected, their rights to these possessions can be presumed to have, in any manner, diminished. This question has however, since that period, been carefully kept out of view; and the Company have been treated, at the different æras of the renewal of their charter, as a body, who had no rights or privileges, but such as His Majesty's Ministers, for the time being, might choose to leave to them, upon receiving a valuable consideration for the exigencies of the state. They have been treated as candidates for the renewal of a lease, having scarcely any superior claims to other bodies of men, who might bid equally high for the privilege of being constituted an East India Company. In this manner, contrary to all right and justice, was a second East India Company at one period formed, for the sake of a temporary accommodation in money to government; and the competition nearly proved the ruin of both. The violation of the Company's rights, by illegal licences to individuals, and associations, was also no unfrequent occurrence in their history. But the plan which is now meditated of depriving them of that privilege, by which alone

* Vide Bruce's Annals of the East India Company, Vol. I. p. 572.

they can deem their other privileges secure, I cannot but consider as a no less unjustifiable, and a much more dangerous violation of their rights, than any that has ever before been attempted.

As it is evinced by facts, so it is by the authority of eminent names, that the Government and Commerce of India are incapable of being separated, but at the imminent risk of destruction to both. Lord Melville, in his Letter to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, of the 28th December, 1808, says:---" I have not yet heard, or read any arguments against the continuance of the system under which the British possessions in India are governed, of sufficient weight to counterbalance the practical benefits which have been derived from it, in their increased and increasing prosperity, and the general security and happiness of their inhabitants." On the same subject, the late Lord Melville, whose opinion on such matters is entitled to the highest deference, thus expresses himself, in a Letter of April 2, 1800:---" I remain equally satisfied as to the propriety of continuing a monopoly of trade, (by this is meant as to *ships;* for as to *goods*, a monopoly did not exist) in the hands of the East India Company. Those who maintain the reverse, appear to me to be misled by general theories, without attending to the peculiar circumstances of the trade they are treating of. Viewing it even as a *mere commercial* question, I believe this proposition to be a sound one; and if the trade were

laid open, the supposed advantages thence arising are at best very problematical, and would certainly be very precarious and short-lived. *It is, however, totally to forget the question, to treat it as a mere commercial one! The same principles which prove the necessity of the monopoly of Trade. The Government and the Trade are interwoven together!* And we have only to recur to a very recent experience, to learn the immense advantages which have flowed from that connection of Government and Trade."

The Chairmen of the Court of Directors had, three years ago, pointed out to the President of the Board of Control, that the effects of the innovation proposed would " amount to the destruction of the Company's Indian trade, their Indian Commercial Establishments, their Indian Shipping, and finally leave the China Monopoly so insulated and unsupported, as to bring that down also, and with it the whole fabric of the Company."

But what have we on the other side to counterbalance those strong facts, those incontrovertible inferences, and those high Authorities? Nothing but the vague and hypothetical reasonings of men, who erroneously conceive that they would themselves be benefited by a participation in the trade to India, It is, then, earnestly to be hoped that Ministers, if such indeed be their motive, will not " persist in this ruinous submission to known com-

bination, and over-bearing importunity;" or at any rate, that the "wisdom of Parliament and the justice of the nation will reject those rash and violent innovations, evidently suggested from a deplorable ignorance of facts."

FINIS.

J. G. Barnard, 57, Skinner Street, London.

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LETTERS

ON THE

East India Monopoly,

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN THE GLASGOW CHRONICLE;

WITH

ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS.

writer begs to disclaim being actuated by any motive of an interested nature; which, however, it may be thought, his publication is not at all calculated to promote. The only end he has in view, and an important one it is, is to open a wider field of discussion—to give greater publicity to a subject so generally interesting, (whether his peculiar opinions be right or wrong,) and thus invite to the question a greater body of intelligence, by means of which its merits may be fully investigated, and accurately ascertained. If his opinions shall be found erroneous, his greatest enemies will at least allow him the merit of sincerity in what he professes; if in the right, the approval of these opinions will be his greatest satisfaction.

THE present posture of the Company's affairs, has given to these Letters an adventitious interest, to which their small merit could not otherwise have intitled them. This, together with the urgent request of friends whom he values, and the belief that they may *possibly* do good, was the sole inducement of the writer's presuming to obtrude himself again on public notice. He will always be proud of the applause of the worthy among mankind, but he solicits no particular patronage—and will not feel at all disappointed if he does not meet with any.

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EAST INDIA MONOPOLY,

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GLASGOW CHRONICLE,

WITH

ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS.

SECOND EDITION.

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1812.

TO THE

GLASGOW COMMITTEE

FOR PROMOTING A

FREE TRADE TO INDIA,

THE FOLLOWING RE-PUBLICATION OF

LETTERS

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THE following Letters, on the East India Company's Monopoly, were written at various intervals, during the close of last year, and beginning of the present, and successively published in the Glasgow Chronicle; for which they were expressly written; and farther, than the circulation which that Paper might afford them, the writer had no intention of giving himself any concern about them, from a persuasion that they were not of sufficient importance to merit it. As to their intrinsic value, he is much of the same opinion

still; they were hurriedly written, at intervals snatched from more necessary pursuits, and a similar disadvantage attends their republication—if such a circumstance, within an Author's own power of correction, ought to be received as an apology for slovenly composition. All the merit he contends for, is that of having directed the attention of his countrymen, to a subject they had been in the habit of thinking very litle about, and of having given them, in, he hopes, an inoffensive manner and temperate language, the results of his own experience and reflection, on the important subject he has undertaken to discuss.

In venturing these Letters before the Public, in a collective shape, the

ON THE

EAST INDIA MONOPOLY.

LETTER FIRST.

To the Chairman and Directors of the Chamber of Commerce of Glasgow.

GENTLEMEN,

As the next Session of Parliament is destined, in all probability, to confirm or abolish the exclusion of British merchants and merchandise from nearly one half of the Globe, it becomes the paramount duty of every well wisher to the interests of his country to bring the subject under discussion; and to examine with care every argument for and against the renewal of that Monopoly, the policy of which has been so long questioned, both by speculative writers and practical merchants, while its continuance is still persevered in.

The merchants of Glasgow are not proverbially accused of want of enterprise, or of slumbering over their own interests, (at least by their Southern neighbours,) yet certain it is, that at a time when their manufactures are rigorously excluded from, unquestionably, the most extensive market of consumption in the world, the greatest part of civilized Europe, and that to which they are admitted, narrowed by the ravages of a desolating warfare; when the United States are threatening similar measures, in redress of real or supposed grievances—when South America rejecting their proffered traffic, is more busily and usefully engaged in demolishing the fetters that have bound her in centuries of servitude—and when Bankruptcy is assailing them at home, in the most various and distressing forms imaginable; yet, at such a time, is the subject of the renewal of the East India Company's Charter as little canvassed, or even thought of, by our merchants, as if every port in the world was open to their enterprise, and the most unbounded success attending them at home.

Two reasons may be advanced to account for this otherwise inexplicable apathy, viz. their previous habits, never having been allowed even to think beyond the limits of the Cape of Good Hope, the world beyond that point is to them as if it

had never existed—except, perhaps, in the story, real or fictitious, of some plundered Nabob; or the marvellous epistles of an expatriated Cadet, for whom that otherwise unknown region has been found a convenient place of *banishment*. —And, 2d, their doubts as to the efficiency of the Oriental markets, the staple manufactures of which are so nearly similar to their own; that is, chiefly, manufactured Cottons. The former, frequency of discussion alone can obviate; to the latter, it may be answered, that to the advantages of the trade of every region of the world, *where Arts exist*, a similar doubt may more or less attach; the conclusion from which would be, that the most desirable commerce for a country to engage in, is a commerce with savages, the advantages of which I have seldom heard extolled. Wherever Manufactures are established, such establishment must always interfere more or less with similar manufactures of our own country, either in home or foreign markets, and render the demand for them less: but this should be no argument for prohibiting competition.

Impressed with a due sense of the importance of the question, and though certainly possessing less information than I would wish, and my readers may require of me, yet, seeing no hope of an abler writer coming forward, I have presumed to

offer a few detached reasons for your bringing your minds to bear upon a question of mercantile policy, in which the public in general, and you as merchants in particular, are, in my apprehension, deeply interested. The end I have in view will be accomplished, if through my humble labours the subject shall engage more general attention.

To those who are not already satisfied of the evil tendency of Monopoly, on general principles, I would recommend the fourth book of Smith's Wealth of Nations, and almost every political writer of modern times; particularly some recent, and very able articles in the Edinburgh Review. As a general question of *theory*, no one seems to doubt that the Monopoly should cease; but danger it is apprehended may arise from the adoption in practice of a system of commercial policy, new in its operations, and which must supersede the long established forms, of one of the most magnificent Mercantile Institutions the world ever beheld, and the probability of involving in the change the form of Government of a large portion of the Globe.

My intention is to confine myself to a very short discussion of the two following objects, viz.

THE advantages of a free trade with India to Great Britain, in general.

AND the peculiar advantages of such a measure to Glasgow, in particular.

AND here I must beg of those who honour me with a reading, to consider the question free of all prejudice or partiality. The subject is not, or ought not to be a party one, but should be examined with a view to its own merits alone, and considered with all the attention due to such questions as involve great political consequences —the future prosperity and well being of two extensive and powerful Empires, and the happiness of millions of their subjects.

LETTER SECOND.

As it forms no part of my plan, I shall decline entering into any history of the East India Company's Monopoly. It will be sufficient to observe, that it was established at a time when the principles of Commerce were but ill understood, and has been continued partly from prejudice and partly from supposed necessity. When the question of exclusive trade came to be mingled with that of the Company's territorial sovereignty, the class of politicians who are always averse to any alteration in long established usages, even although they should be proven to be bad, were appalled at the very notion of a change; and although they acknowledged and approved of a system of commercial freedom GENERALLY, yet rejected this measure, when coupled with such a companion. At length, the extent of territory has become so great, and the task of legislating for, and governing, such a numerous population, so complex, that these politicians confidently pre-

dict nothing less than the irrecoverable loss of all our Indian possessions, if the exclusive charter of the Company be allowed to expire, and a system of free trade permitted, thus mingling the question of exclusive trade with one with which it has no absolute concern. There is no positive necessity for considering the territorial administration of the Company and their exclusive trade as one question. The former may remain with them, under some modification, (and I for one sincerely hope it may so remain,) and the latter be restored, as it is his right, to every British subject.

It is, I believe, generally acknowledged, that such a Monopoly as that of the commercial one of the East India Company, is injurious to the general interests of the country where it is established, except in one doubtful case, and that is, in the instance of a new country, where capital has not accumulated in the hands of individuals sufficient to enable them to engage in precarious and remote adventures; although this exception is, in some measure, disproved by the practice of America, whose merchants engross, and chiefly by British capital, a great proportion of Indian trade*. The provisions of the excluding Acts

* This must be taken with some limitation. It was certainly true, at the time America was allowed first to participate in

were *ostensibly* dictated by the paternal vigilance of our Legislature to prevent individual ruin. There is not, however, any very great necessity *now* for the exertion of such an over-weening care, in preventing people from ruining themselves. Give them liberty and protection, and leave the result to the unfettered operation of individual interest. If it is a losing trade, it will soon, as it ought to be, be voluntarily relinquished; if otherwise, abundance of capital and enterprise will be found in the country to carry it on.

When it began to be doubted if the trade of the Company was a saving trade, it was asserted, that it was merely a trade of remittance of the *surplus revenue* of India. It is now, however, pretty clear, that since 1798 they have had no surplus revenue to remit; *but an actual deficiency of a million and a half annually*, as exhibited by the papers laid before Parliament. This, however, may doubtless be charged to the expenses

this trade; but the case is *now* widely different. The really American Capital, at present embarked in this traffic, is immense. If I were at liberty, I could mention one Citizen, of an insignificant sea-port of the United States, little better than a fishing town, who employs a capital of three hundred thousand pounds, at least, in the Indian commerce, in which it has been chiefly acquired; and many examples of a similar nature might be produced.

of Government, and not to trade. But, from the Report of the Company's affairs, laid before Parliament in 1805, it appears, that they actually *lose* on the balance of exports and imports; of course, it must be on the whole a losing trade also, and one which, with reference to itself, they ought not to continue.

But, although the Company lose, it does not follow that individual merchants would do so. Their shipping establishment is on the most magnificent and expensive scale—their ships constructed and equipped for the double purpose of trade and defence, and well appointed in officers and men. The former, to the great credit of the Company, are not surpassed in professional skill by any in the world—uniting scientific knowledge with great practical experience—and trained to perform the most difficult nautical manœuvres with the greatest economy of hands. Such officers would be a useful acquisition, in the event of the trade being thrown open, to every sea-port town in the kingdom. The extra expense of such an establishment would be, of course, saved to the individual merchant, as also that of the port-officers, inspectors, surveyors, masters attendant, deputies, &c. unnecessary in a free trade.

Fettered as the Company are, in the mode of bringing their cargoes to sale, it is not likely that the most is made of them. The time and manner of sale are regulated by Act of Parliament, and may take place when least calculated to insure the best price. Their necessities too, of late years, may have compelled them to include in their sales articles but little in demand, on which a great loss would necessarily be incurred.

In fine, mercantile matters are always better managed by one than by many; and peculiar circumstances, already noticed, induce the belief, that the maxim is fully as applicable to the Company's Commercial Corporation, as to any other public body whatever.

LETTER THIRD.

From the days of Da-Gama downwards, the Asiatic dominions have been considered as mines of wealth, by every nation of Europe, and each has accordingly endeavoured to engross the largest share to itself: and, what is not very usual in competition, by precisely the same means—by exclusive companies, royal charters, &c.—certainly not the most effectual way of turning the wealth of India to the best account. The English, at length, by the effect of a mere naval superority, and not from acting on any superlatively enlightened views, have acquired the sole dominion, political and commercial, of this envied portion of the globe, with an exception or two, scarcely worth mentioning. The questions will, therefore, be—What are the causes which render the Indian trade so much an object of desire to the states of Europe? And now that this darling object

is *entirely* in our possession, how it may be managed so as to produce the greatest possible benefit?

An answer to the former has been, in some measure, anticipated; and is in some measure, unnecessary. The productions of India are generally known, and are become absolutely requisite to the gratification of European wants and desires. By this admission, the *demand* for Indian products is acknowledged; and this leads to the second inquiry, viz. By what *means* is this demand to be most effectually supplied? The main question, to which every thing past has been a mere introduction, and a question not of a very easy solution.

It has been strongly maintained, even by parties friendly to a free trade, that no effectual demand for European Manufactures can ever obtain in India, and its dependencies, except among European settlers—at once, a motive and apology for universal subjugation. This, however, is far from being the case. Among the Hindoos, to be sure, whose simple wants are limited to their own productions, and those too, but few, the allegation will apply; but to the rest of the population, less under the controul of religious prejudices and positive sumptuary

institutions, no such objection will attach. It may be said, that with the exception of European settlers and Hindoos, the whole population beyond the Cape is in a state of savagism, or but little removed from it. Grant this—what is the inference? Why, by trading freely and frequently with them, by mingling and associating with them, you humanize their manners, and make them exactly what you wish them to be—a people possessing desires similar to your own. Eighteen centuries have not elapsed since a Roman annalist described the Attacotti, the inhabitants of the very spot which we inhabit, whose blood probably runs in our veins, as a race of *cannibals*; much further removed from civilization than any of the Asiatic races, however mortifying such a consideration may be to our national vanity. Let us, therefore, instead of conquering and pillaging them, as Europeans have too frequently done, endeavour to better their condition, by communicating the arts of civilized life; and posterity, if not we ourselves, will reap the benefit of it.

But it is not true, although it has been admitted, that the population beyond the Cape, with the above exceptions, is savage. The Arabs, who, above a thousand years ago, gave laws and literature to, at least, a part of three quarters of the

globe, are far from being barbarous. A sufficient indication of which is, the extent of their trade. Their ships are coasting in all directions along the shores of India, many of them of large dimensions, and not unskilfully managed. In the small sea-port of Cannonore, on the Malabar coast, six to eight Arab vessels, from 100 to 250 tons, may be found anchored at once, and chiefly consigned to one Black merchant. Their trade, indeed, extends to every part of India, and is far from being insignificant. It would be humbling enough to the boastful pretensions of the Chinese, to be considered as a nation of barbarians; and, I dare say, the devout *Musselmen* of Hindostan, would be apt to retort the imputation of savagism, on such profligate slanderers of the sanctity of the Kaaba. The Burman empire, according to Col. Symes, has made great progress in civilization, and its inhabitants acquired habits of useful industry, while they enjoy the means of making it infinitely productive. I would, indeed, question, if the abandoned population of Botany Bay, would not rather choose to be axed with the most atrocious breaches of moral duty, than with a want of *refinement*, which the very circumstances of their banishment would disprove—being for crimes chiefly incident to an advanced state of society. The inhabitants of the Archipelago, including the large islands of Sumatra, Borneo, Celebes, &c. from

their intercourse with European settlers, are advancing in knowledge, and acquiring a desire for almost every production of art suitable to their climate; and nothing can so effectually tend to increase those desires as to show them the possibility of gratifying them. The mixed population too of India, is immense. The descendants of European males and native females, whom the policy of a late Right Honourable Traveller would consign to everlasting banishment from every part of the British possessions, though endeared to them as the place of their nativity, and for no crime, but that defect of character, which their accidental place in society generates —that vigilant and almost undeviating exclusion to which they are subjected as individuals, and the privations and disabilities they suffer, as citizens —a system which has always produced similar effects, wherever it has been practised—these with the Portuguese and their descendants, form a mass of population, from Mallacca to Surat, great in point of numbers; but, from the above circumstances, and some others, weak and inefficient, but which a more liberal policy might remedy.

LETTER FOURTH.



Among the places, beyond the Cape, capable of being turned to advantage by British capital and adventure, I would instance the Island of Madagascar, a name scarcely heard of, although the voyage round it might be made from this port in six months. The southern part of the island is about a fortnight's easy sail N. E. of the Cape, is in length near a thousand miles N. to S. and in breadth about three hundred. The Bay of St. Augustin, on the S. W. side of the island, is an excellent and capacious harbour, but badly supplied with water, except by proceeding a considerable way up the river, and filling at quarter flood; at which time the water is least brakish. The island is intersected by a range of mountains, which, it is said, abound in precious minerals. It is, in general, a perfect garden for fertility, producing almost every thing by the very simple

operation of stirring the surface, periodically, with a forked stick. Ebony, aloes, various dye-woods, and vast abundance of gums and resins, with aromatic and medicinal herbs, are found here in profusion. Flax, and hemp of a very superior quality, are produced; together with tobacco, indigo, silk, and cotton. But, the arts of rendering these articles useful are little known among the simple inhabitants. The sugar cane is likewise uncommonly large and juicy, a foot of cane having been found to weigh 1¼ lb. Wax, honey, and ambergris, may also be procured in great quantities. Provisions, viz. rice and cattle, are abundant. They want, in return, muskets, powder, ball, &c. beads, and every instrument of iron and steel; pullicate handkerchiefs, and every species of cotton goods, and not *unusually rum*. The population was commonly rated at four millions: but the French officers, who traversed the island in 1791, say, it *certainly* contains above two millions; and the appearances about the coast justify this assertion: it might, indeed, be infinitely greater were it not for their inhuman practice of infanticide on those born on what they choose to call unlucky days. Such a population, with hospitable and social habits, lively good-natured dispositions, and, withal, having a strong propensity to truck and barter with their European visitors, to mingle with their society,

and even to imitate their manners, might, with little aid, be trained to more useful arts and rational pleasures, as regard themselves, and made to contribute more effectully to the wants and enjoyments of others.

Those of the inhabitants, about St. Augustin, who have acquired a smattering of English, are remarkably fond of titles of distinction. The sailors accordingly have, with great liberality, exhausted the whole British peerage in ennobling their naked favourites, who assume all the airs of greatness, and seem as much satisfied with their proud pre-eminence, as any Knight of the Bath. *

* Two of these *sanscullote* worthies came on board one of the Company's ships; one had been, on a former occasion, created, "Lord Anson;" the other was "unhonoured." The latter, however, before he left the ship, begged the peerage, with great earnestness, of the boatswain, who, with corresponding solemnity, made him "Duke of Marlborough." The new-made Duke could not resist pledging his friends at grog time, and being of a social turn, drank rather more liberally than a *prudent* Peer would have ventured on. This, with the intoxication of his new honours, raised his self-importance to such an unreasonable pitch, that in going ashore, he quarrelled with his less dignified companion, and, without much ceremony, struck him across the back with his paddle. The insulted Anson was not so much disposed to passive obedience, as the imaginary distinction of the rank of the other seemed to require, and with great agility and utter disregard of the Ducal dignity, levelled a blow at the aggressor, which laid him sprawl-

That no settlements have been made among them, save that of the French at Dauphine, has been owing almost entirely to the treachery of that people, who made pactions with this simple people, but to break them; and introduced among them the horrid traffic in slaves, formerly unknown. The cruelties of the French were, at length, the means of their extirpation, although they attribute their abandonment of the island, to the untameable savagism of the natives, whose habits never could be brought to assimilate to those of their oppressors; but which the testimony of every one disproves, with whom I have conversed on the subject, who has had opportunities of being among them. Since that time, no attempt has been made to recover their lost possessions.

I humbly conceive, an advantageous barter might be established, between this people and the British, if no attempt is made to conquer them. An exchange of commodities is, however, all that could be expected for a considerable time. Except the adventitious circulation of the nations whose people visit the island, no currency, that

ing, and gave him such an unmerciful pumelling as had well nigh put an end to the life and titles of Marlborough together. The Duke was so much ashamed of this rencontre that he never after visited the ship.

deserves the name, exists. The want of a circulating medium would therefore be greatly felt, without the substitution of an artificial paper currency. This defect would, however, in process of time, be remedied, by frequency of intercourse, by improvemen in all the arts of life, and by gradual, but peaceable, colonization. A labourer cannot increase his skill in a day, nor can a waste be brought into cultivation in years; but time and example will effect both. And to circulate their productions, a suitable medium will be found. The iron money of Sparta, would soon have been succeeded by a more convenient instrument of commerce, but for the sumptuary laws of Lycurgus.

LETTER FIFTH.

The Act which first effectually secured to the East India Company their Monopoly, was the Stat. 9th and 10th, William III. c. 44, which, though it has been frequently subjected to partial alterations and modifications, remains still unrepealed by any subsequent statute; and any infraction of its enactment by British ships or subjects is, at this moment, illegal. Such parts, however, as inflicted penalties on those invading the Charter of Monopoly were repealed by the Stat. 33d, George III. c. 52. which, *inter alia*, authorized foreigners to buy, sell, and export from India, provided such exportation did not interfere with, or was struck at by, the navigation laws; and permitted British subjects residing there to act as factors and agents for foreigners carrying on such trade.

As mere matter of bargain between the British Government and a portion of its subjects, the British nation would have had comparatively little reason to complain of the exclusive Charter, obtained by the Company, had the exclusion been of universal operation,—comprehending foreigners of every description in common with its own subjects. But this is by no means the case; invidious exceptions are made, and these exceptions are, with justice, the chief subjects of complaint and jealousy.

It is justly remarked, by Hume, in his Essays on the jealousy of trade, that "where an open communication is preserved among nations, it is impossible but the domestic industry of every one must receive an increase from the improvements of the others." That distinguished writer, however, had in view an unreserved and entire communication; in which point of view the truth of the maxim is indisputable, but the commercial policy of this country, for no very sufficient reason which I can perceive, permits its application only half-way; and, as if it were to be feared that the domestic industry of India might become exorbitant, by too free an intercourse, Americans are allowed almost entire liberty of trade, while British subjects are allowed no trade at all, except through the medium of the Company.

By the treaty concluded in 1795, between the United States and Great Britain, it is stipulated, that the ships of the former, shall be freely admitted to the ports and harbours of the British dominions in India, to trade therein, and that it is not necessary that such trade shall be carried on between America and India direct, but that it may be conducted circuitously by Europe, and by British subjects naturalized in America. They are, however, prohibited the coasting trade of India; but the prohibition does not extend to the carrying their original cargoes, from one port to another. Under the sanction of this Act, American ships swarm in the Indian ocean, and crowd every port of the Asiatic dominions, carrying on a lucrative trade with the colony of a country, whose own natural-born subjects are barred all participation in. I have the authority of the Court of Directors themselves, for stating, that the total amount of the Imports to British India, in bullion and merchandise by the Company for seven years, ending 1808, was £10,486,629 sterling, while that of Americans and Foreign Europeans, amounted for the same period to £8,335,369, or near about four fifths of what the Company themselves imported. The Company's exports in goods alone, amounted for the same period to £8,108,897 sterling, and those of foreign Europeans and Americans, to £7,241,035,

or little short of seven eighths of the Company. Thus are British merchants deprived of a trade to the extent of about £1,200,000 a year almost equal to that of the Company, and of which they cannot possibly avail themselves, but which our Legislature unaccountably permits Aliens to engross, to the utter exclusion of British subjects. I can farther state, that I myself have seen, within the short space of three months, eight or nine American ships, none of them less than 300 tons burthen, clear out from the single port of Calcutta alone. And what return do they make for this boon? Why, for this act of preference they repay us with the vilest ingratitude.—Not an expedition was ever planned by any of the Indian governments—not an armament was fitted out, or a fleet sailed from an Indian port, but these licensed Aliens, became the vehicles of information to the French Governors at Mauritius, (intentionally or otherwise I know not,) who benefited largely by their underhand communications; to which the writer at one time had nearly fallen a victim, together with hundreds more, whose lives or captivity were of greater importance. It was indeed, at one particular time, suspected, that this was not the least lucrative part of their *trade* in these seas, whatever foundation there might have been for such a suspicion; that source has, however, recently failed them, by the capture of the Isle of France.

It may be remarked, in concluding this letter, that at the time this act was passed, our Government had a motive for conciliating America; that, however, has long ceased to avail them; and the Americans, regardless of their true interests, like other great babies are set about quarrelling with their nurse, discharging at her every species of abuse, and splitting her ears with their vociferous imbecility, unmindful alike of the obligations they owe to the source of their existence, and to the maternal hand that conducted them through infancy and childhood, to their present advanced state of nonage—where we must for the present leave them.

LETTER SIXTH.

Among the ancients, and even down to a very late period, the trade of India has been considered entirely as a trade of luxury, as carried on with European nations. The chief articles of commerce were, therefore, such as nations far advanced in refinement could alone have any demand for, such as precious stones, pearls, aromatics, silk, and the finer manufactures of cotton. The chief commodity exported in return for these articles, and for which there existed the greatest demand, was silver. The productions of Europe are still but little in request by the nations of India; and indeed no part of the world depends so little on foreign countries for either necessaries or luxuries. This peculiarity may be ascribed partly to the influence of the Hindoo religion, which forbids the use of almost every luxury, and particu-

larly that of the table, if any way defiled by the unhallowed hands of a christian *—partly to their long established customs and habits—and partly to the blessings of a fertile soil, and favourable

* Any person who has ever been among this singular race of people, must have observed many instances of their unconquerable obduracy in this particular. The writer will be pardoned for quoting *one* or *two*, among many, which his observation has furnished.

The Sircar (book-keeper,) of an officer belonging to one of the Company's ships, had occasion to visit him on board, while lying in Saugor roads, (at the mouth of the Hoogly, near 100 miles below Calcutta,) ready for sea. During his stay, it came on to blow very hard, so that no boat could venture alongside the ship, consequently he was left without the means of escape ashore, and had not wherewithal to satisfy his hunger, on board, save what had been necessarily touched by the undevout hands of christians. In this dilemma he was kept twenty-four hours, during which time, he neither eat nor drank. In the extremity of hunger he was repeatedly urged to eat some plantains, abundance of which hung over the stern, and to palliate this breach of religious duty, he was told, he might do it at a time when no one could perceive him; but he manfully resisted the temptation. It is *possible* he might have allowed himself to perish a martyr to this absurd prejudice; but the gale abating, prevented such an issue to the experiment.

The writer and two young Cadets were proceeding from one of the Company's ships in Saugor roads to Calcutta, in an open native boat, and expecting to fetch Diamond harbour with the first tide, the wind being favourable, they neglected to

climate, producing every thing their simple manner of living requires. Of late years, however, this trade has acquired a very different character —the exports from India, and particularly from China, are *now* viewed *among us* as much in the light of necessaries as the productions of our own soil.—What substitute could we obtain, for instance, for tea, for nutmegs, or for pepper?—yet these were considered, by our ancestors, as articles we could do very well without. Silver is still a commodity greatly in demand in India, owing to the causes above enumerated, together with the absence of mines of that metal, but much

take any sort of provision with them. The wind, however, shifted before they could reach the narrow part of the river; the tide left them, and night came on, when there was no alternative, but to attempt to return to the ship, or to anchor. The latter was resorted to, although the calls of hunger became very pressing, and this was no situation to have them satisfied. The boatman, who had been long absent from shore, had only two handfuls of rice, which he very humanely agreed to boil and share with them. When the repast was prepared, one of the young gentlemen, very innocently, as he imagined, thrust his knife into the rice boiler, in order to fore-taste his expected feast; but, alas! this rash proceeding was fatal to the entertainment; for no sooner was the sacred vessel polluted by his profane touch, than over-board it was pitched, together with its contents, by its indignant owner, to the great mortification and disappointment of all parties, and to none more so than the innocent cause of the catastrophe.

less so than formerly. This change has been brought about by an increased European population, which has introduced the practice of substituting a more artificial and cheaper circulating medium for that of the precious metals, and other financial improvements, which diminish the uses of coin; and has also produced a greater demand for the commodities of Europe, to satisfy the wants and gratify the taste of those whose habits and tastes are still European. These changes, therefore, which have gradually taken place, in the commerce with India, have been, on the whole, favourable to Europe, by the increased demand for the productions of India in Europe, and by the increase of the exports, in return for these productions. We ought next to consider, whether this change has been accompanied by a corresponding alteration in the commercial policy of Britain, (which is now, in point of fact, *Europe*, so far as India is concerned,) so as the trade may be turned to the best possible advantage.

To avoid repetition, I must here beg my readers to refer to what was said in my first letter on Monopoly in general, and to the books there quoted; and also to what was stated relative to the Company's revenue, of which their trade was *once* said to be merely the remittance. But, alas! this golden dream, this flattering solace

can no longer satisfy or amuse us. It is now proven to have been an unsubstantial pageant—not one farthing of revenue has there been to remit for these many years; but, on the contrary, millions have been required, from England, to fill up the waste occasioned by a protracted and desolating warfare, in extending possessions, which, to be secure, ought to be universal; and when acquired will not repay the expense of conquest. As to the profits of the Company's trade, I fear they are nearly as unsubstantial as the revenue. By the papers and accounts laid before Parliament in 1805, although the gain on imports were considerable, yet were they more than balanced, by the loss on exports, (which is not to be wondered at, when it is considered, that the chief articles of export are bulky commodities, on which the charges of transportation are proportionally high to their value,) for which we have the avowal of the Directors themselves, that they "export with a loss," purely, as they say, to encourage manufactures; but really, in compliance with the statute, to stop the mouths of those who would otherwise be disposed to clamour against the Monopoly, and the necessity they are under of exporting *something* to supply their own wants, and provide their home investments.

By the aid of some dexterity in figures, of which

the Hon. Court of Directors avail themselves, it is almost impossible to separate the Territorial from the Commercial part of the India Budget, so as to be able to state precisely, the losses or gains on cash, distinctly, so artificially or necessarily are they blended together. Still so much may be gleaned as will go near to satisfy us, that by their *trade*, they gain nothing; and indeed, it is the universal belief among all well informed persons, both in India and at home, that were it not for the China Trade, the balance of loss would be great yearly. That they do lose as it is, has been averred by Lord Lauderdale, in his Inquiry, who gives the authority of the Directors themselves for the truth of his averment, and my own scanty observation, (which my readers may probably trust but little to,) confirms my belief of the correctness of his Lordship's assertion in this, although I would not pledge myself to follow his *reasoning* in other parts of that ingenious work. If, therefore, their Monopoly produces nothing but loss to the Company themselves, or, at least, no gain; would it not be as well to abandon it, to those who would either turn it to advantage, or discontinue it altogether, ? particularly, as it is now understood pretty well, and as stated above, that they have had no balance of *revenue* to remit in any shape, for these many years past. So far, therefore, as regards the Company, the relinquishment

of their trade ought rather to be an advantage to them, than a hardship; but what will be said, if it can be shown, that the entire British Empire suffer by the exclusive trade, and would gain infinitely by its abandonment.

It will not be difficult to show, that whatever may be its effects abroad, the Monopoly at *home* is directly against every one unconnected with the Company, and who require the productions, which are the objects of its traffic. Nothwithstanding Legislative interference in the time and mode of conducting Sales, the Monopoly has still a decided tendency to keep up the price of goods, by its power of creating an artificial scarcity of them.—The Directors, however, inform us, that it is by their imports alone they gain any thing, and that through them the country largely participates in this gain; an inference that scarcely any but a friend to the Monopoly would venture on: for it seems quite clear to me, that whatever wealth the Monopoly enables them to draw from their imports, (and it alone is the cause of enabling them to sell higher, than under a free trade,) it must be drained from the pockets of their countrymen, and from them alone. This is communicating *gains* with a vengeance! "Call you that backing your friends? *A plague on such backing!*"

By a Free Trade, the exports for some time might not greatly increase, but they would be turned to better account, while the profits on the imports would be regulated by the demand, and the extent of competition in supplying it. Moreover, the Trade would be more beneficially diffused, in such ports, and in such quantities and proportions, as their respective wants required. Thus saving the whole expense of inland conveyance, from the London Market, besides brokerage, and other incidental charges, which usually add greatly to the value of Indian productions, before they can be brought to their final place of consumption.

In my next, I shall humbly endeavour to point out the peculiar advantages of a Free Trade, to this City.

LETTER SEVENTH.

In following me through this tedious detail, my patient reader will, doubtless, have perceived an evident leaning towards one side of this question, viz. that of a free trade, which circumstance may excite a suspicion among many, of the soundness of my conclusions; unless it can be shown, that they proceeded from facts, which came under my own observation, or which can be fairly substantiated. My intentions were fully developed in the First Letter, and those certainly were *not* to write *in favour* of the Monopoly; but, at the same time, I am not aware of having throughout aggravated any fact, or bent any reasoning, to favour the opinions which I myself might choose to hold on this subject. I humbly profess myself a partizan, but should deeply regret, if such a profession could by any means, or in any degree, tempt me to a violation either of truth or consist-

ency. I shall, therefore, in the discussion of what remains of this subject—a discussion probably the most interesting to my readers—endeavour to confine myself to such circumstances as came under my own observation, or which can be corroborated by the experience of others.

That the port of Glasgow is *naturally* calculated for the Trade of India, and still more so, from the demands of its manufactures, I conceive it will not be difficult to show. A vessel sailing from the Clyde, in the month of April, or even May, has, at least, an *equal* chance of a North-easterly wind, to carry her into the Trades; if so, by going large through the Southern Trade, and standing well to the Southward, when she falls in with variable winds, she has every chance of being off the Cape in seven to eight weeks, at which time she will have the wind blowing strong at West, or within two points either way, provided she keep a high Southern latitude (about 37 deg. or 38 deg.) This wind will carry her as far as 75 deg. E. long. when it will be time to haul up for the Bay of Bengal, if proceeding thither, and after encountering a few days' baffling winds, under the line, she will fall in with the regular Monsoon, in about 5 deg. N. and reach Madras in about seven weeks more—or three months and twenty days from the Clyde. From thence to the Sand

Heads, at the entrance of the Hoogly, or Bengal river, the distance may be run down in five days, at this season, or any time before the middle of October, when the Monsoon shifts.—Thus, if the ship leaves the Clyde on the first of May, she may reach Calcutta by the 25th or 30th August, (touching at Madras, may detain her a few days longer,) allow her the whole of September and October, to dispose of her outward, and provide her homeward cargo. She sails again on the first of November, with the first of the North-east Monsoon, which carries her as far 4 or 5 degrees North latitude. In about ten degrees South, she falls in with a trade, which carries her well to the Westward, and near 28 deg. S. About the middle of December, she doubles the Cape of Good Hope, with light variable winds, and, generally at this season, moderate weather. Here she may water, and if no accident occur, may reach the Clyde about the latter end of March, or beginning of April; making the voyage round in less than eleven months, and if little repair is wanted, may be again ready to sail in May. That this calculation has not been assumed hypothetically, or from doubtful data, the writer can assure his readers, (if his own bare assertion will suffice,) that he has, more than once, made the passage out from Portsmouth within three months and twenty-five days, and that too, with a large fleet of Indiamen,

which is generally put under easy sail during the night, to avoid separation; and the passage home from Bengal in four months, deducting the time lost at St. Helena, which, in time of war, is always considerable.

Another advantage which the local situation of Clyde affords, ought not to be passed over without notice, on this occasion. During the months of March and April, it is very well known, that East and North Easterly winds prevail in the British seas, so that a vessel arriving on the coast, at this season, runs every chance of being tossed about for weeks, in attempting to beat up Channel, or of being reduced to the necessity of bearing up for some port in Ireland; probably Galway Bay, or the river Shannon, there to wait a favourable change, and, perhaps, when such change occurs, and the vessel puts to sea, she is a second time driven back. This, the writer himself has experienced, when, after beating about off the west of Ireland a considerable time, a partial shift of wind to the S. W. enabled the vessel to make up Channel, as far as the Start Point.—Again it chopt round to the North-East, and blew with increased violence, forcing the vessel to bear up a second time, and run into Plymouth Sound, where she lay a fortnight. Whereas, had she been bound for the Clyde, she would have got

safe into Greenock, nearly within the time she took to make the Start, and thus saved a fortnight's time, another passage, and much tear and wear.

It may also be noticed, that it is by no means necessary ships in this service should be of extraordinary dimensions. A smart vessel of about 400 tons, well found, manned and armed sufficiently, to match a small privateer, is probably as useful a size as any that could be adopted, if carefully constructed. Such vessels frequently make better sea boats than ships of the largest dimensions, and are less expensive in maintaining. They would also have this advantage, that in Bengal they could proceed to the very town of Calcutta, without discharging a single ton of cargo, whereas the Indiamen load and unload at Diamond Harbour, 50 miles below that city, filling up at Saugor, near 100 miles from the same place, at an incalculable expense of freight, and considerable risk of loss. *

* It might have been worth while to have taken into account, the mighty risk of Navigating the British Channel, which ships trading to the Clyde, will always avoid.—I can enumerate, at least, six fine Indiamen lost on this dangerous coast, since the year 1799 or 1800, besides many lives, and property to the extent of several hundred thousands sterling.

Having thus, with as much brevity as posible, and with as much minuteness of detail as my plan afforded, pointed out a few of the advantages which nature has bestowed on the Port of Clyde, so far as mere *navigating* is concerned, it now remains, that I direct my readers to the capabilities afforded to a free trade to India, from the nature of the manufactures, the spirit and enterprise of the merchants, and the extent of capital of Glasgow and its subsidiary ports, ready to be employed in any new undertaking which may afford a chance of success; and which will close my very humble, and perhaps very tedious, trespasses on public indulgence.

LETTER EIGHTH.

HAVING in a former letter, humbly attempted to point out to you some of the natural, or physical capabilities of the port of Clyde, for a trade with India, I now take leave to direct your attention to those factitious advantages, which the extent of population, the state of society, and, above all, the establishment of extensive manufactories, bestow. —The latter, as the medium of consumption of East India commodities, almost unequalled in Britain.

ON a former occasion I ventured a few remarks, in order to remove the apprehensions of those who think that from the similarity of productions, the trade of India could be of little advantage to Glasgow; but lest the arguments of an anonymous letter writer may fail of producing the required effect, I must beg to call in the aid of Mr.

Hume, an authority which will probably have more weight with my readers, and which is at all events, in a speculation of this nature, more deserving of regard. That profound writer, in his Essay on the jealousy of Trade, has the following remark.—" Nature by giving a diversity of geniuses, climates, and soils, to different nations, has secured their mutual intercourse and commerce, as long as they all remain industrious and civilized. Nay, the more the arts increase in any state, the more will be its demands from its industrious neighbours. But what if a nation has any staple commodity? Must not the interfering of our neighbours in that Manufacture be a loss to us? I answer, that, when any commodity is denominated the staple of a kingdom, it is supposed that this kingdom has some peculiar and natural advantages for raising the commodity; and, if, notwithstanding these advantages, they lose such a manufacture, they ought to blame their own idleness, *or bad government, not the industry of their neighbours.*" —And again,—" we need not apprehend that all the objects of industry will be exhausted, or that our manufactures, while they remain on an equal footing with those of our neighbours, will be in danger of wanting employment. *The emulation among rival nations serves rather to keep industry alive in all of them.*" This passage of Hume will not be hastily questioned, particularly, as the truth of it has been illustrated by the prac-

tice of almost all commercial countries, where freedom has been established. But it is not true that the exchangeable commodities of this country and India are so much alike. Do we not require large supplies of indigo, and does not India afford us these supplies? In drugs, gums, and resins, the demand of this district of the empire is very great, and from India chiefly, are these commodities received, and, indeed, must be received, as no other spot in the world produces them, at least in sufficient quantities for the existing demand. Scarcely is there a manufactory established in or about Glasgow, where the products of India do not enter into some part of its processes, and in many are indispensably requisite. But the article of most universal consumption, and to the greatest extent, is tea; and which no part of the world but Asia can supply us with. The quantity of tea annually consumed in this district of Scotland must be immense; perhaps greater than that of any equal proportion of population in the British dominions. When it is considered, that here even the very beggars drink this beverage *, and per-

* The notice of this circumstance suggests an apparent paradox in economy. In this country those who live by begging alone regale themselves daily with tea, whereas in China, a class in society at least one degree above them, viz. labourers, where the article is produced, and the price not above one-third of what it is here, cannot afford to taste of that luxury but on very rare occasions. Their ordinary meals being rice boiled

sons of all ages and of every condition; whereas in England, the more ordinary liquid in use among the male population is beer, and especially among tradesmen and mechanics, who with us limit their desires to at least a more harmless substitute. Taking the consumption of Britain at twenty million pounds annually*, that of Scotland would, at least be equal to eighteen hundred or two thousand tons, at the most moderate computation. The proportion even of this one article to the trade of Glasgow would be a most favourable augmentation; and without taking to account what might be re-exported. Still it may be urged, that although we may be partially benefited by freedom of importation of the articles we daily consume, yet the advantage will be but trifling, unless we can make a return for such importations, by the export of our own manufactures.

and seasoned with curried offals, or esculent vegetables. The paradox may be partly explained by a comparison of the relative difference between the ordinary products of the soil and daily food, of the two countries, and articles of luxury. In China rice is abundant every where, and tea is cultivated, to any extent, in one or two provinces only. In this country the difference in value between a breakfast of bread and tea (such as is used by beggars) and one of any other article of food in use among us, is but small.

* This is far below the *actual* amount.

If we import at all, we must, in some shape or other, give an equivalent for the articles imported, either in goods or the precious metals. For the former, I ventured to assert, in a previous letter, there would always exist a demand to a certain extent, which would regulate itself by the nature and circumstances of Government encouraging, or otherwise, to the free exertion of population, of capital, and of industry. When our goods cease to be in demand, our equivalent will then of necessity be either silver or gold, which we must purchase of some other nation, to enable us to export it, and for which we must pay *in goods*. So that it is a matter of little importance, whether these goods be exchanged directly, for those of India, or indirectly, by exchanging them for dollars, and these last again for the commodities we desire to import: our manufactures being, in both cases, the ultimate payment.

At some period, perhaps not very distant, the Continent of South America will mightily promote the objects of a Free Trade to India, from its presenting a convenient stage, in an outward bound voyage—the demand that exists for our manufactures, and the supply of the precious metals, which an East India Trade would at least for a time require. From the little that I have

seen of that fine, but misguided country, I had formed the most favourable opinion of its capabilities, if moral circumstances, coupled with the absurd and flagitious policy of its Government, did not rather encourage and promote habits, the very reverse of those, which conduct a people from idleness to industry, from the most servile of all bondage to freedom, and from imbecility to exalted power. Her energies, after being cramped for ages in cruel and ignoble servitude, are probably now destined to receive a quickening impulse, and a new direction, which will urge her forward in the way of improvement, to a distinguished place among the nations of the world, for which the singular bounties of nature seem to have destined her, and which the undeviating folly, and wickedness of her cruel oppressors, shall not (I hope) be permitted to restrain.

By a very recent treaty of our Ministry with the Prince Regent of the Brazils, if I am not mistaken, we are expressly barred from carrying between that Principality and India. A more enlightened policy would have dictated a different arrangement, but we were thankful, it seems, for any sort of treaty with these *very Carthagenians*, glad to be admitted to their alliance on any terms: it would therefore evince the blackest and most malevolent

ingratitude, " to look the gift horse in the mouth."

Being now near the close of my humble intrusions on public patience *, a trespass, which I hope, most of my readers will pardon, I cannot avoid expressing my satisfaction at the success of my undertaking. All that I ever intended, or could presume on, was to direct public attention to a subject, and to a quarter of the Globe, little thought or talked of. In this I have happily succeeded, and more, I had not the vanity to calculate on. An anticipation of the effects of different maxims and institutions, which so great a change might require and induce, I must leave to those, whose leisure and attainments more eminently qualify them for such an undertaking. It is not for me to legislate for sixty millions of subjects, or propose plans for the government of such an immense empire. I will only venture to say, that it does not appear to me as indispensibly necessary, that the mode of government should be substantially altered, although the trade were thrown open. Of the rectitude of intention, and even just and enlightened views, of the Honoura-

* It will be observed, that this letter was intended to be the last—subsequent events, however, induced the writer to make some additions.

ble Court of Directors, no one will entertain a doubt, thwarted as they frequently are by the Board of Controul; and of the singular liberality, ability, strict honour, and integrity of their servants abroad, generally speaking, every one will readily acknowledge, who has ever been among them, so that if faults exist, they must be imputed to the system, not to its administrators *.

When the merciless tyranny of a second Attila is ravaging the largest and finest portion of Europe—when his cruel and capricious edicts, are threatening to replunge the countries subjected to his sway into ignorance and savagism—when every step he takes is followed by desolation and misery, and commerce reduced to a mere name—this is not a time for us to cling to the last remaining shackle on our industry; and to aid his views by

* From authority which I cannot discredit, and owing to circumstances purely political, I have (17th Oct. 1811,) *now* every reason to believe, that the Charter of the Company *will be renewed*, with some trifling modifications, unless very boldly opposed by the independent members, backed by the importunities of the merchants of the out-ports, who have the deepest interest in the abolition, or continuance of the Monopoly; and it is apprehended, this is not the juncture for *them* to contend successfully, with such a powerful body of supporters, as the friends of the Company can marshal. Discussion, however, will be of use, by preparing the public mind for future and perhaps more successful attempts.

the pertinacity of our adherence to a system, so much like that which is the daily object of his policy. Political and Commercial freedom, has in all ages been uniformly followed by greatness and opulence: and slavery and restraint, by weakness and poverty. As Greece and Rome became free, they rose in opulence: when they became enslaved, they fell. And such has been the fate of every state, of which we possess any record. And pray God it be not that of Europe also!

The unnatural and unpromising aspect of the Continent, at this moment, forces upon me a reflection, which right or wrong, I cannot help entertaining, and which is calculated to lead to rather sorrowful anticipations of the destinies of mankind. States, like individuals, have their infancy, youth, maturity, decay, and fall. The history of the world has been nothing but a series of such events. The Assyrian, Egyptian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman Monarchies, successively rose on the ruins of each other, and successively fell before their more fortunate competitors. Europe, like another Phœnix, rose from the ashes of the Roman Empire, to be the center of every thing great in arts, in science, in morals, and in religion. In following her through the several stages of her progress to her present condition, one cannot help being struck with a parallel between her

and her last predecessor. Both attained to wealth and power, to ease and happiness; to the possession of every moral and intellectual improvement which sweeten and adorn existence. But these blessings have been abused in both. The character and conduct too of the Modern Dictator, tends to draw the parallel still closer.—From the time of his passing the *Rubicon*, to that of his investiture with the imperial purple, this merciless destroyer of human life and happiness, has unceasingly pursued one line of policy, and secured by every means, the establishment of universal despotism. When it shall please Providence to rid the world of such a scourge, his Generals, like Anthony, Lepidus, and Octavius, may quarrel and may butcher each other; but there is great reason to fear the system will continue, till the cunning and address of a second Augustus rivet the chains his predecessor had forged, and in Europe, as in Rome, nothing be known of freedom, but the name.

If the superior structure of the British Constitution, the checks which it opposes to the encroachments of arbitrary power, its insular situation, and above all, the superiority in moral and political virtue of its population, shall avert the blow from us, and prevent our sharing a similar fate, we

ought to be singularly careful in avoiding every thing which has a tendency to provoke it. Let us adopt the golden rule, which is of equal application in politics as in morals, to do as we would be done by, not as we are done to. Let us rather give to our enemy the example of forbearance, than oppose him, by imitating his own flagitious policy. Let us guard with equal vigilance against the abuses of liberty, and the approaches of tyranny, giving due encouragement to the dissemination of rational freedom, and the cultivation of patriotic virtue; the best and most effectual bar to every species of corruption—a crime which more easily besets the rulers of wealthy nations, and which their subjects ought vigilantly to detect.

> Britons! be firm! nor let corruption sly
> Twine round your hearts indissoluble chains!
> The steel of Brutus burst the grosser bonds
> By Cæsar cast o'er Rome; but still remain'd
> The soft enchanting fetters of the mind,
> And other Cæsars rose. Determin'd, hold
> Your *Independence*; for that once destroyed,
> Unfounded, Freedom is a morning dream,
> That flirts aerial from the spreading eye.

It has been too much the fashion of late, among true believers in the immutability of the British Constitution, to vilify and abuse every one who could doubt its stability.

Such opinions are most dangerous to the very constitution on which they lavish so much flattery. Such security they may indulge in while the foundations of it are sapp'd.—"Nero fiddled while Rome burn'd"—they may smile, but their country is ruined. It is only she possesses no better patriots. That such a consummation may be long averted, that she may long remain free, prosperous, and happy, is the ardent prayer and wish of,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient devoted servant,

LETTER NINTH.

When I had last the honour of addressing you on this subject, I adverted shortly to the present state of trade to China, and took occasion to notice the vast and increasing proportion of this trade, which by the operation of the Company's exclusive charter, has been in a manner thrown into the hands of the subjects of the United States of America, who thus enjoy the entire benefit of a lucrative commerce, and that too with British capital, while those who afford them this capital are denied all direct participation in it. I regret to find that my observations on this part of the subject have been strangely misapprehended; but I hope, with all humility, I shall be able to show, that the public opinion, as I have heard it expressed, has been

somewhat erroneous, and that wrong conclusions have been made from unquestionable premises.

It has been argued in my hearing, that China is a free and independent nation,—that as such she has the right of trading with whom she pleases,—that we have no right to interfere in the election she may make of trading with America,—that we may make what enactments we please, to prohibit the trade of America with the Company's territory in India, but we cannot interfere with her own trade,—and, therefore, that it were *the wish of China*, America would trade *to an equal extent*, although the Company's Charter were abandoned to-morrow. The premises I willingly allow, and never did dispute them, but, in my apprehension, they lead to a very different result. It is not that China and America are friends, and trade with each other, that British merchants complain, but it is of their *own countrymen* they complain, who refuse them a participation in that commerce, which, profitable or otherwise, they conceive to be their natural right; and which, if gainful, America enjoys the whole advantage of, while they ought at least to share it with her. If the trade were open to Britain as well as to America, is it to be doubted, that Bri-

[illegible] enterprise would drive America

trade almost entirely her own, in Chinese commodities, at present: and if any benefit is derived from this trade, will not Britain be the gainer? Besides, although the consumption of British manufacture among this singular people, is but limited, yet, by a judicious policy, might they be gradually weaned from their prejudices in favour of their *modest* countrymen, whose proud pre-eminence *in all things*, must not be questioned by a nation of *watch-makers* *, as in their lofty humours they choose to designate us, and certainly of the little they do consu[illegible] we would have the supply. At present, I [illegible] reason to believe,

* A few years ago, when a *row* by a few drunken sailors interrupted the loading of the Company's ships at Whampoa, Captain Craig of the Elphinstone, as Commodore, forwarded an address to the Viceroy, or Emperor, (I forget which,) abundantly crammed with superlatives to *coax* Yau-fo. The Viceroy in his answer to this document, in the humility of his heart, told the Commodore, that the British nation were little less than a pack of ungrateful dogs, that by the gracious permission of the *Emperor* of *Emperors*, they had become rich and *wise*, by trading to China, and saucy withal; whereas, before, they knew *nothing* but how to *make watches!* Yet those are the people who never durst venture a fortnight's voyage from their own shores; who without the aid of French or English Ephemerides, cannot calculate an eclipse, or even the most simple of the moon's phases; a country where common honesty is unknown, where infanticide is reduced to a system, and where prime ministers condescend to be flogged at the cart's tail.

that the imports to China by Americans, *exceed* those of the East India Company, exclusive of specie, and no one will deny, that an importation even to this extent, would greatly benefit our merchants, at all times, and more especially at the present. The exact amount of this importation, it will not be easy to ascertain, but I was recently put in possession of a document which may lead to an approximation to such a result, on the authenticity of which I have every reliance, as it came from a quarter not at all liable to suspicion, and indeed where no motive to falsify could exist. By this document it appears, that in little more than a year, ending November, 1810, there had been exported from the Port of Canton, in American bottoms, 12,450 tons of tea, besides porcelain, silks, &c. a quantity equal to the sales of that article at the India House for a twelvemonth. The value of this exportation cannot be estimated at much less than three millions sterling, but call it two millions five hundred thousand, then the next question will be, how was this payment provided for? In what shape was it made?

As the laws of the Chinese empire do not permit colonization, or even the residence of foreigners, except a few commercial agents,

nection on the part of the Chinese themselves, it follows, that the facilities which the negociation of bills of exchange afford to merchants almost every where else, are here barely known. A few bills on England, Bengal, and even America, are sold by Americans, but to no great extent; the chief payments must, therefore, be made in specie, or in goods; the proportions, however, of each, I have no means of ascertaining; but, at all events, by both the one and the other, are the Americans likely to be benefited—if in specie, to procure it, they must barter goods *somewhere*,—if in goods, it is probable a considerable proportion of them have been imported from Britain at a *profit*, so that if the outward investment, does not yield much gain; it, at all events, furnishes a capital whereon a large profit arises by the homeward investment. We cannot, however, blame the Americans, for making the most of their China Trade, but we ought to deplore [illegible] includes us

this cruel aggravation, that although, like Ovid's Spider, *our bowels* are extracted, we are not, like her, allowed the privilege of *weaving them ourselves.*

During the year 1810, the exports from China, by the Company's ships, were somewhat less than usual, owing probably to the want of Capital, and not to a diminished home demand, as it is said, from the increased use of West India coffee; when the very reverse, I believe, is the fact *.

A similar cause prevents our turning to account the Spice Islands, formerly so lucrative to their possessors. By our re-conquest of the Molluccas, and the recent accession of Java, we have driven the French and Dutch from the last strong hold they possessed in Asia; indeed, the only fragment of the trade, enjoyed by these nations for many years past, has been confined to an occasional ship of war, stealing to Europe with a cargo, and with various success. Notwithstanding these acquisitions, spices have become scarce, and consequently dearer, not by following the policy practised by the Dutch, of making an annual

* It is asserted, by very intelligent merchants, that the demand for tea has *increased* since coffee became so low in price, and this belief is pretty general.

bonefire of the surplus Aromatics, to prevent a fall in the price—but from the want of wherewithall to purchase them, or to pay the labour of cultivating and collecting them. In more direct terms, their capital is unequal to the vast region, over which their mercantile Monopoly extends, and their territorial revenue is now entirely exhausted, by the expenses of the different Government establishments; and indeed, falls short of their actual demands, instead of furnishing a large net surplus, to be remitted home in investments.

In again addressing you, I cannot resist noticing, as an indication of growing attention to this subject, on the part of the public, the resolutions of the meeting of merchants at Greenock, on the 27th ult. on which it is proposed, to found a Petition to Parliament. In thus, however, expressing my satisfaction at this event, I would not be understood to insinuate, that my very humble essays, had the smallest share in bringing it about; and I beg to assure you, that my joy would not be the less sincere, to see every town and village in Britain, pursuing similar measures, although coupled with the assurance, that even the very name of this paper had never been heard of amongst them. My sole object in obtruding myself on public notice, was, if possible, to stimulate inquiry on this subject—not to satisfy it—to point out,

(like a finger post,) where the road lies—not to conduct my readers through it—and if they shall happen to fall upon it of their own accord, and without the aid of a directing *Post*, it only proves that they may be right, without my assistance, but it does not prove that I am *wrong*.

If I understand rightly the import of the sixth of the Greenock Resolutions, it seems, as if on it they intend bottoming their Petition; if so, I fear, granting the prayer of it, would not greatly benefit them. If the Company were to retain the whole of the China Trade, also that of their own territory, and the exclusive supply of Great Britain, what remains of Asia could be turned to little advantage. A carrying trade might doubtless be maintained to some extent, but the chief commodity which could be obtained from the *open* territories in return for our manufactures, would be spices, and which admit but of a limited demand, all over the world. A considerable trade might be carried on in drugs from Sumatra, and the neighbouring islands, but the article for which there exists the greatest demand is tea, and which would form the staple commodity of a free trade. Without this, I do not see what the homeward cargo could consist of, [illegible]

this, their most lucrative, as well as most extensive commerce.

The Greenock Gentlemen disclaim every intention of trenching on the *substantial* rights of the East India Company. This is at best an ambiguous declaration of neutrality. The adjective *substantial*, being capable of as great a variety of qualifications, as may suit the arguments of either party. Those Gentlemen may have a very clear comprehension of what they believe to be the substantial rights of the Company—on the other hand, the Directors see *as clearly* the extent of those rights, and yet, I dare say their conceptions of them, are not only different, but contrary. If the Monopoly is bad of itself—if the country is under no obligation to continue it—if the continuance of it would inflict more mischief, than it could possibly do good—and if its abrogation would be productive of more benefit than loss, or inconvenience to the *whole British nation*; then it seems to follow, that *whole*, and not *half* measures, should be resorted to.—When, however, the sum total of the influence of the Company is considered, and the infinite variety of channels in which it is exerted, the task seems almost a hopeless one; but stirring the question, is the chief means of making converts, and the object of contention is surely worth the contest. I do not, how-

ever, presume to arraign any part of the resolutions of these gentlemen, but on the contrary highly applaud the public spirit that dictated them, and hail them as a happy omen of the extension of that liberal inquiry, which always conducts to results founded in truth and reason. And as the value of the trade to the Eastern Archipelago, which these Gentlemen would limit themselves to, can only be estimated by an experiment, which has never yet been made, it is surely worth while risking it—besides, value being not an immutable, but a constantly fluctuating quantity, circumstances may occur in the lapse of a very few years to alter materially its amount in this instance. When our ancestors made North America a place of banishment for those who should have been *hanged*, I conjecture they valued it a small *matter*.

From the little I have heard of the Physical and *Moral* capabilities of New Holland, I am persuaded that a beneficial commerce, with that vast country, will in time be opened, if a liberal policy be adopted in the Government of it, and few restrictions laid on its infant trade. But this is a field on which I cannot at present enter.

LETTER TENTH.

It would be an unnecessary waste of your time, and a sort of insult on your understandings, to repeat the trite maxim, that the wants and desires of mankind give rise to trade, and that the gratification of these wants stimulate new desires and new wants. It would be more suited to practical purposes if the *sum* and *precise objects* of such wants, in any given country, or given time, could be shown to a tolerable degree of certainty. Where a legislature does not impose arbitrary and capricious exactions, or hold out equally unreasonable bounties, the want of information in these particulars is the chief cause of failure in mercantile speculation, and a proper knowledge of them almost the only means of insuring success. Where any particular adventure is entered into without adhering to this discreet rule, every thing is trust-

ed to *chance*, and may turn out fortunately, or otherwise, as that blind guide shall please to direct.

To the above circumstances, or their inability to profit by them, has been owing in a very great degree the losses of the East India Company. Wars in India have of late exhausted their territorial revenue, yet trade they must, for the purpose of meeting their home payments, and in hopes of better times; while many of the articles they import are utterly unsaleable, others of diminished value, and, at best, but saving a loss, some few articles excepted. It would not be long thus with private adventurers: they would have no particular commercial system to support; if the trade did not succeed, they would relinquish it. Besides, a private adventurer, if he found the home market glutted with the commodities he imports, would instantly proceed elsewhere with his cargo, as a more enlarged demand might prompt him. This the Company cannot do; their importations must be to the port of London alone, where the goods are warehoused, and cannot be re-exported, without becoming subject to a sale and heavy charges, which a private trader would save, by proceeding directly to a better market. In their exports, the same thing would occur: a private trader, if he found his cargo unsaleable at

one port of Asia, would try others, till he found a market for his investment. This the Company cannot conveniently do; the cargoes of their ships are necessarily discharged at the ports to which they are destined at home, (some few cases excepted,) without being subjected to any change of circumstance, of supply, or demand. To be sure, as their cargoes are, to a great extent, military and naval stores, their adhering to such a practice is of less importance; but where the investment happens to be of a general nature, the effect must be very injurious.

THERE is also another very obvious reason why the Company do not trade to the same advantage as individuals might. Their being sovereigns as well as merchants, the duties of the former (to which I believe they are most zealously attached) occupy the greatest share of their attention. At all events, their political, must necessarily interfere with their commercial duties, and where such opposite pursuits are combined, it is not in nature to expect that both will be prosecuted diligently. The minute details of a Mercantile Counting House are totally incompatible with wielding the destinies of a mighty empire. In their capacity of merchants, much will depend on such minute and apparently trifling information, as in their character of Sovereigns, would be unworthy of notice.

To this political and commercial *monstrosity* must be attributed, to no inconsiderable extent, the want of success of the Company in that department to which their views have been of late years, perhaps, the least effectually directed. In short, they cannot perform impossibilities—they cannot do the duties of both sovereign and subject.

Anxious as I am that every British merchant should, at least, have the election of making trial of a trade from which they have been so long and so injuriously excluded, I would, with all humility, however unpopular such counsel may be, warn my countrymen not to be too sanguine in their first views of profit by it, nor to indulge in golden dreams out of which it is possible ruin only may awaken them. Much certainly may be expected, and rationally, from such an additional field to adventure; but I fear (pardon my apprehensions) that more is looked for from this measure than ought, in reason, to be anticipated. In arguing such an unpopular point, one runs great risk of incurring odium. The public voice is now loud against the Monopoly, and a woe is pronounced against him that shall attempt to preserve a vestige of it. The people have been told by Dr. Smith and other eminent men that all Monopolies are very bad things; that the East India Monopoly is one of the *worst* kind; and, *ergo*, by regular syl-

logism, it must be bad—and must be entirely swept from the face of the earth—the trade laid open, and the country free to every species of colonization. By the same process of reasoning from *generals* an empyric might infer that air and exercise are excellent good things for restoring health, and, acting on this conclusion, might order his gouty patient to get out of his bed or easy chair, and run six miles every morning before breakfast! Would a skilful physician, who knew any thing of a gouty disorder, recommend such practice, however much he might be satisfied that air and exercise were good *generally?* or would the patient long survive such a violent experiment? Such an exception to general rules, do I conceive, the question regarding the Company's *territorial* possessions to be. No instance has ever occurred of a similar form of government, and extending over such an immense region as that which the Company rules; and to effect too violent a change might produce more mischief than would the continuance of the old system—the *immediate* effect of all revolutions in government being injurious and often fatal to the countries where they occur. If the trade is gradually laid open, as it doubtless will be, the disposal of the future sovereignty of India may be safely left to the Legislature, where the subject will engage the most

serious consideration of people the best qualified to judge of its merits.

As it may be of use to point out the objects of this traffic, to those who have not been in the habit of inquiring into such matters, I subjoin a list of those articles which most generally form the homeward investments of private traders; craving pardon of the better informed of my readers for forcing on their attention what is already familiar to them.

ARTICLES WHICH MAY BE IMPORTED

FROM

INDIA AND CHINA.

Aloes Cicotrina.
Aloes Hepatica.
Alum.
Anana Beads.
Assafœtida.
Bark.
Bandannahs.
Benzoin.
Borax.
——— unrefined (Tincal.)
Buds or Bloom of Cassia.
Buffalo Hides.
Cakelack.
Cambojium.
Camphire.
——— unrefined
Cardamoms.
Carmenia Wool.
Cassia Lignea.
Chassam Silk.
China Porcelaine.
China Root.
Cinnabar.
Cinnamon.
Clove Bark.
Cloves.

Cochineal.
Coffee.
Columba Root.
Covial Rough.
Cotton Wool.
Cotton Yarn.
Cowries.
Dragons Blood.
Drugs.
Ebony Wood.
Elephant Teeth.
Extract Rhubarb.
Fossil Alkali.
Galbanum.
Ginger, Green.
Ginger.
Gold dust.
Gum Amoniacum.
—— Arabic.
Gum Elemic.
—— Lack.
—— Myrrh.
—— Sarcocol.
Gum Tragacanth.
Hemp or Paut.
Indigo.
Ivory wrought from China.
Japan copper.
Lacquere. Ware.
Mother of Pearl do. Drops,
do. shells.
Mace.
Myrrh.
Nutmegs.
Nutmegs candied.
Nux vomica.
Oil Cinnamon.
Olibanum.
Opium.
Palampores.
Pepper.
Pepper long.
Piece goods, all sorts.
Pimento, Allspice.
Red Wood.
Rhubarb.
Rice.
Safflower.
Sago.
Sal Amoniac.
Saltpetre.
Sandal, or Japan wood.
Sealack.
Silk, all kinds.
Shellack.
Shawls, Cashmere.
Spikenard.
Sticklack.
Sugar.
Sugar Candy.
Tea, black.
—— green.
Turmerick.

The above list is by no means so full as might easily be made out, but contains merely the arti-

cles most familiar to me, and which the little helps I possess enable me to furnish. It ought however to be noticed that several of the articles included in the list are prohibited, except for re-exporting, on the principle of their interfering with our own manufactures—a policy in some instances questionable.

LETTER ELEVENTH.

When I first ventured to engage myself publicly in the discussion of this important topic, I had no end in view but that of attempting to add to the stock of materials, necessary to a thorough investigation of the affairs of the Company, and of our Indian commercial policy generally—as also to solicit the country to engage temperately in such an investigation—previously to their becoming an object of legislative provision. What I undertook was prompted by a deep-rooted conviction, the result both of some little reflection and of observation, which the circumstances of my life (perhaps unhappily) presented me with sufficient opportunities of making. In taking, therefore, the side I did in this question, I probably acted with more conscientiousness than policy; but, as I would ra-

ther choose that the former should be my rule of conduct than the latter, or at least that my character should partake more largely of the one than the other, I am willing to suffer some little inconvenience by it, particularly as it may serve to establish my disinterestedness, a qualification of some importance in such discussions.

This brief statement of my views I considered necessary to prevent any misconstruction of my motives in making a remark, which the reading of several publications on the same side of this question forces from me, and that is, that this contest with the Company (as is too often the case in all discussions of a similar nature) has assumed a tone of asperity and personality not at all calculated to aid the cause in which it is employed. The Directors, as well as the inferior servants, of the Company, are treated with as little ceremony, or even civility, as if they were no better than licensed plunderers, and indeed are called so in terms not very equivocal. Such abuse, were it even merited, does more harm than good, as it always leads to a suspicion of weak argument, and is more particularly hurtful in this case where argument abounds. Let them aim their most deadly shafts at the system of Monopoly, by which the country has been most injuriously excluded from an intercourse with the fairest portion of the globe;

but let not the reproaches, which ought to be exclusively levelled at the system, fall indiscriminately on the heads of those who are entrusted with the execution of its details. The fault does not lie with them, however reluctant they may be to part with that authority with which the country has invested them. This is no more than human nature, and the Directors are no more than *men!* But farther, such abuse is not only hurtful to sound argument, and offensive to good breeding, but is directly contrary to fact. It is well known that among the servants of the Company are men of the most incorruptible integrity, the most splendid heroism, and the noblest patterns of virtue—men of the highest attainments in arts and literature—and whom Britain may proudly boast of numbering among her sons. The achievements of a Clive, ought not to be forgotten, and the enlightened labours of a Jones or a Colebrooke—and an hundred more distinguished names ought, at least, to rescue the servants of the Company from the flippant censures of malignity or ignorance.

There are too, some politicians, who can see no danger whatever in new-modelling the whole of our Indian policy and government, and who would apply the same broad principles of legislation to those regions which are considered as

best suited to the very differently compounded States of Europe.* To me such a measure has always appeared to be fraught with danger, if not impossible ever to be put in practice. To apply the principles of a free government to a population whose manners and habits have been framed and nourished in despotism; and, above all, who are notorious for their superstitious pertinacity of adherence to their own peculiar notions, both of government and manners;† to a people who, from their previous habits, were unqualified to perform any of the functions of a free constitution

* "If we could conceive a nation where each of the inhabi-
"tants had but one eye, one leg, and one hand, it is plain,
"that before you could institute them into a republic, an al-
"lowance must be made for those material defects wherein
"they differed from other mortals; or, imagine a legislator
"forming a system for the Government of Bedlam, and pro-
"ceeding upon the maxim that man is a sociable animal,
"should draw them out of their cells, and form them into cor-
"porations or general assemblies; the consequence might
"probably be, that they would fall foul on each other, or burn
"the house over their own heads."—*Swift's Works.*

† It may not be improper to notice here, that amid all the changes of masters which the Asiatic dominions have experienced, a very material change in the government has never been thought of. They may hate, may depose, or may murder their tyrants, but they never think of attributing their vices and crimes to a defect in the constitution, or by any checks attempt to remedy it.

—seems to me the most dangerous of experiments. An experiment which, if hazarded, would not fail to produce the most fatal consequences. To alter essentially the system of government or jurisprudence you must first alter their religion; and to attempt this suddenly would be to plunge these fine regions into all the horrors of revolution, and drive its inhabitants to despair. * And such would be but an indifferent way of insuring either the glory or the safety of the British name and possessions in India. When Solon was asked if the system of laws he had framed for the Athenians

* It may be thought unnecessary to multiply instances of their sensibility to insult, and their quickness in resenting it, when it seems in any degree to have been aimed at their peculiar superstitions or prejudices. I hope I shall be pardoned, however, in mentioning *one*, among hundreds, which came under my own observation:—

A foreman ship-wright in one of the principal dock-yards of Calcutta, by pure accident, voided his spittle on one of the native workmen. The man instantly threw down his tools, and vowed vengeance. In a few minutes, the insult was communicated to the whole workmen in the yard, amounting to several hundreds, who immediately struck work, and demanded reparation. The tumult continued nearly four hours, and it was not till the master-builder appeased the resentment of the insulted man, with a handsome gratuity, sufficient to restore him to his *lost cast*, that the uproar subside —Even after all, it would have been difficult, had not it been made manifest, that it orginated in an accident.

were the most perfect, he replied, "No, but there the that can be framed for the Arm" So, whatever change may be contemplated in the administration of India, the moral peculiarities of its inhabitants must, for centuries to come, preclude all hope of an assimilation to even the broad and leading features of the policy of European States. A gradual and partial melioration might doubtless be accomplished; but even this must be delicately managed, if the peace and security of these countries be respected. *

I MUST beg leave to repeat here, what I have

* On the difficulty of applying general principles in politics, without a due study of *particulars*, Professor Stewart has the following judicious remark, if I may be allowed the assistance of a name so distinguished:—

"In every country whatever, besides the established laws, "the political state of the people is affected by an infinite "variety of circumstances, of which no words can convey a "conception, and which are to be collected only from actual "observation. Even in this way, it is not easy for a person "who has received his education in one country, to study the "government of another; on account of the difficulties he "must necessarily experience, in entering into the associa- "tions which influence the mind under a different system of "manners, and in ascertaining (especially on political sub- "jects) the complex ideas conveyed by a foreign language."
—*Elem. Phil. Hum. Mind*

uniformly maintained, that I would much rather see the *patronage* of India vested in the Court of Directors, for some time at least, than in the hands

To engage in a speculation, on the peculiar institutions, civil and religious, and the singular manners and habits of the oriental states, particularly of those subject to the authority of the Company, would be out of my province, and far beyond the reach of my capacity. I cannot, however, dismiss this subject without noticing the impressions I have received from the very partial observations I have been enabled to make on this extraordinary race of people—particularly as it opens a wide field for the speculations of the moralist, to reconcile the apparent contradictions of human nature, and to resolve into one general system, those discrepancies, which to ordinary minds seem to bid defiance to every rule of reason, and every principle of Philosophy—to arrange, combine, and systemise, is the province of the moralist—my more unambitious task shall be confined to the detail of a few facts.

Amid all the changes which have taken place in India, the character of the original Hindoo inhabitants remains unaltered. They still continue to be the same soft, effeminate, and timorous race, they ever were; their minds are seldom to be roused above ordinary exertion; and if, by chance, it should rise to an act of heroism, it is only what Montesquieu somewhere calls, "the heroism of slavery." There is, however, in their religion, a principle of fanaticism, which stimulates their courage or supplies its place—and the same individual that would now prostrate himself in the dust, and kiss the very shoe-ties of an execrable drunken Englishman, to save himself from perhaps a trifling blow, may next hour be found suspending himself voluntarily, by iron hooks thrust in his flesh,

of his Majesty's Ministers. Such an overwhelming addition to an influence already great, might prove very dangerous, if not fatal, to our own li-

and exulting in his sufferings, merely to comply with some absurd rite, prescribed by the extravagant superstition of his religion.

Among all the doctrines that have obtained among mankind, none has tended so much to enslave the mind, as that of absolute uncontroulable predestination: that the famine may waste, the sword ravage, and fire destroy, *unresisted*, merely from a belief that God has willed it, seems the most absurd, as well as the most dangerous species of belief, or rule of conduct, by which men can be actuated. Yet this belief is universal among them, of which the following anecdote is an apt illustration: —

A fire broke out in the Bazar at Calcutta. Fortunately, a part of one of the Company's ship's crews, on leave of absence, were quartered near, who soon repaired to the spot, headed by one of their officers. The fire had just reached the house of a Hindoo shopkeeper, known to the officer, and whom he found sitting, with apparent unconcern, and a hand on each side of his head. He was asked "Why he did not get up and exert himself to save his property?" to which he replied "that it was of no use, since God had decreed that it should be burnt." By pulling down some intermediate bamboo huts, which communicated the fire to the buildings, and exerting a little activity, it was soon got under by the seamen. The officer now accosted his friend, prefacing his address with an expletive usual among sailors, "well," said he, "you see we have prevented God's decrees." "Ah no! Saib, Saib," rejoined the devout worshipper of Bramha, "you have only proved that, although God decreed the fire, he likewise decreed *you should be sent to extinguish it!*" Yet the same man

the revenues of these countries, for the unexpired period of their grant, would yield an abundant return for the charges of subduing them. Such reasoning is partly right and partly wrong. Although the Company knew the period at which their Monopoly was to expire, they also knew that on all former occasions it was renewed to them: matters are *now*, to be sure, very different from what they were formerly, yet still they might not be altogether without hope of a similar issue. But they have still a much better argument, in the necessity they are under of maintaining their establishments, to the last day of their political existence, complete and entire. What would become of their vast and expensive establishment of ships, which at the end of two years must cease to be employed, if no prospective arrangement shall prevent it? and how much individual misery would follow the absolute annihilation of the commercial part of the Company's civil establishment in India? an establishment which comprehends thousands educated expressly for this service, whose habits more peculiarly fit them for such avocations, and who would by the measure of a free trade be thrown entirely out of employment. Besides, there are many branches of civil expenditure which it would be impossible for the Company to reap the entire benefit of, if they should cease to exist as an exclusive Company

by the wisdom of ages and the universal experience of mankind. All this they should have at least attempted, before endeavouring to persuade us that an exclusive trade, is the only trade applicable to regions comprehending nearly one-third of the known world.

In the letter above-noticed, the Protectorate of Cromwell is triumphantly alluded to as an exemplification of the necessity of Monopoly, and as a satisfactory proof that if the trade were laid open universal ruin would be the consequence. But it ought to be remembered (and I have ample documents relating to those times before me to prove it) that the failure of that experiment, if it failed, which I do not admit, arose not from any inherent excellency of the Monopoly system, but from the insufficiency of individual capital and the shortness of the period allowed for the trial. Had the one been greater, and the other longer, a different result had been shown. But, even admitting that many cases of individual ruin would occur, it is an evil that would soon work its own cure, and in a way which all the world knows, and which it would be an unprofitable waste of time to say any thing more about.

The argument however on which the Directors seem chiefly to rely, which may be considered